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THE
Chartist Agitation
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Memoranda of the Chartist
agitation in Dundee

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MEMORANDA

OF

The Chartist Agitation

IN

DUNDEE.

DUNDEE:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM KIDD.

1889.

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THE CHARTIST AGITATION.

CHAPTER I.

Trade Depression and Political Agitation; the Unemployed in Dundee; Efforts to alleviate the Distress; the Political Union and the Radical Reform Association; the General Election of 1837; Dissension in the Political Union; Renewal of Agitation; Delegates from Birmingham.

Those who have carefully noted the political and social signs of the times, must have observed that periods of severe commercial depression usually synchronise with those of bitter political agitation. When trade is brisk, employment plentiful, and wages good, the working classes, as a rule, do not trouble themselves much respecting their political grievances, real or imaginary. But when commercial depression occurs—when wages have a downward tendency, and masses of men are idle who would willingly work—invariably do they fall back upon their political wrongs, as being the cause of these industrial evils. Such has also been the experience in Dundee. A long continued spell of stagnation in the staple trade of the town developed a situation which caused a large portion of the working men to eagerly accept ‘The People’s Charter’ as the grand panacea for all the ills of life, and to join heartily in the movement for its adoption.

In the spring of the year 1837, Dundee was visited by one of those unfortunate periods of trade depression of which it now knows so much. In the month of May, the

number of unemployed operatives in the town was very considerable ; and the Political Union, which had for some time been in a state of 'suspended animation,' assumed renewed vitality. The Radical Reform Association was also still in existence at this time, and was not slow to resume agitation. The distress amongst the unemployed continued to increase, and to alleviate their sufferings steps were taken by the Town Council and by the principal bankers, merchants, and manufacturers. A requisition, signed by many of the merchants and manufacturers, was forwarded to the Earl of Airlie, as Lord Lieutenant of the County, requesting him to call a meeting of the County, to consider the best means for relieving the operatives. To this requisition his Lordship addressed a reply to Provost Kay, declining to call such a meeting, on the ground that the commercial distress was general in the other towns and villages in Forfarshire, and that the county could not consistently be called on to relieve the operatives of Dundee in preference to the suffering poor of any other place. There being thus no help to be expected from the county, the wealthier inhabitants of the town exerted themselves to do all in their power to afford relief to their poorer townspeople.

At the general election in July, of the same year, public attention was strongly directed to the political questions which were then before the country. Mr John Gladstone was brought forward in the Conservative interest in opposition to Sir Henry Parnell, who had formerly represented the burgh, as a Whig ; and after the election was over, a serious dispute arose among the members of the Political Union, in consequence of the manner in which some of them had voted. Several members of the Council, having been dissatisfied with the political

conduct of Sir Henry Parnell, were anxious to bring forward a thorough Radical, and with this view they made an application to Colonel Thompson, formerly member for Hull, who was known to be a Radical reformer. Being unsuccessful in inducing that gentleman to become a candidate, and considering that Mr Gladstone, though a Conservative, was preferable to a pledge-breaking Whig, a number of them gave their support to Mr Gladstone. For this they were severely taken to task at a meeting held in the Thistle Hall, which was characterised by extraordinary uproar, violence, and tumult, and the offenders were ignominiously expelled from the hall.

The following year 1838, will ever be memorable for the active agitation which was then commenced all over the country for 'The People's Charter.' In May there was a revival of political agitation in Dundee by a visit which was paid to the town by Mr Collins, of Birmingham, that headquarters of Radicalism. Mr Collins was a delegate of the Political Union in that town, and had been sent down to Scotland on a tour of agitation, to advocate Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, Vote by Ballot, and other ultra-Radical measures. He addressed a meeting of the Dundee Radicals on Wednesday, May 16, in which he strongly advocated these various reforms; and as a means towards their attainment he urged the expedient which had so often previously been brought forward—that the working classes should abstain for twelve months from all excisable liquors, by which the revenue would be abated to the extent of £20,000. This 'treasonable' proposal met the entire approval of the Conservative *Courier*, which deemed it so sensible, that it declared its readiness, if it thought it would be carried out, to turn Radical itself. The Tory organ, however, had no more faith than the

Radicals themselves that this ‘antidote to the real evils under which the people groan’ would be adopted.

A further deputation from Birmingham shortly afterwards visited Dundee; and in honour of the visit, on Saturday, May 26, a demonstration took place on the Magdalen Green, of which the *Courier* gave the following very one-sided account:—

‘On Saturday last, this “Great Demonstration,” as announced in the hand-bills, took place on the Magdalen Yard Green. The Radicals worked hard to congregate their thousands, but never had they more difficulty in bringing a few hundreds of the “unwashed” together. As a last resort, bills had been stuck up calling on the Irishmen residing in town to swell the mob.

‘It had been announced that the Birmingham agitators—consisting of Mr Attwood, a Mr Muntz, a Mr Douglas, and another person—were to make their *entrée* into Dundee at one o’clock afternoon. To give them a proper reception, the ragged and dirty banners of the Reform Jubilee were produced, and all was in readiness for a flare-up. When, lo! and behold!—one, two, and three o’clock came, but no word of the deputation. The hour of meeting drew nigh, and the fears of the committee were exceeding great; when, to their great comfort, the Birmingham deputation made its appearance, but without its head, Mr Attwood, who had fled to London, and left the deputation to pursue its labours in a desperate cause without his assistance. The disappointment of the committee at the loss of their “lion” was very great; but as the patriot Muntz had a mane shaggy enough to make the vulgar stare, they did not altogether give up hope of their “demonstration.” The procession formed—more than one-half boys, mill-girls, and women of the Cyprian class—proceeded to the Green, with the motley banners.

above mentioned floating above its ranks. There the spectator was struck with the mean appearance of the throng. The women kept the outside of the crowd, and the boys were partially separated from the men; the small number of the latter, compared with former meetings on the same spot, showed plainly that Radical demonstrations were at a sad discount. Hustings had been erected for the accommodation of the committee and deputation; and, as if to burlesque the abstinence-from-whisky resolution of the former meeting, a tent was put up for the sale of spirits to the mob. Fortunately, this latter erection was observed by the Chief Magistrate just before the hour of meeting, and by his orders was removed. In order to raise funds, sixpence a head was charged for a place on the hustings, and on that account they were by no means crowded. The fuglemen took their places in front of the chair, the speakers arranged themselves behind, while a patriot, by no means *elevated* in his intellectual pursuits, staggered about in the back part of the scaffold.

‘A voice in the crowd called on Mr Robert Burns, basket-maker, to take the chair; another voice seconded the motion, and Mr Burns complied with the request. He explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to consider the petition of the Birmingham Political Union, and hear its deputation speak thereon.’

The approval of the petition having been carried by acclamation, Messrs Muntz and Douglas addressed the assembly, after which it was agreed that a union should be formed to co-operate with the Birmingham Political Union for the purpose of advocating its objects. The procession afterwards re-formed, returned to the town, paraded the streets for some time, and then quietly dispersed.

CHAPTER II.

Continued Agitation for the Charter; Alarming State of the Country; the 'Six Points'; Dundee Delegate to the National Convention; Financial Condition of the Political Union; Proposed New Association; the *True Scotsman*; Physical Force; Chartists Drilling; the National Convention; Report by the Dundee Delegate; Riots in Wales.

As the year 1838 advanced the agitation for the Charter assumed serious proportions. The Chartists assembled in various parts, armed with guns, pikes, and other weapons, and carrying torches and flags; and the state of the country was becoming quite alarming. As a result of repeated conferences and negotiations in London and Birmingham, a committee consisting of six of the London workmen and six of the members of the House of Commons, were appointed to draw up 'The People's Charter.' Daniel O'Connell was the chairman of this committee, and was the first person who attached his signature to the Charter as finally approved of. The 'Six Points' contained in it were as follow:—

1. Universal Suffrage.
2. Vote by Ballot.
3. Annual Parliaments.
4. Payment of the Members.
5. The Abolition of the Property Qualification.
6. Equal Electoral Districts.

A Radical demonstration took place in Dundee in October 1838, on the occasion of the election of a delegate to represent the Radicals of the town, at a general gathering in London, called the 'National Convention,' in support of the Charter. Mr Robert Burns was the delegate selected, and he repaired to the Metropolis in due course, in fulfilment of his mission.

Meanwhile, the local agitation was continued with great vigour. At a meeting of the Political Union, in the Watt Institution on the evening of Monday, March 11, 1839, it was stated that the sum of £40 had been collected in Dundee in support of the Charter agitation; and affairs generally were declared to be flourishing. Some difference of opinion existed, however, as to the precise lines on which the agitation should proceed; and this divergence even imperilled the movement altogether. On the evening of Tuesday, March 26, a turbulent meeting was held in the Caledonian Hall, Castle Street, at which it was proposed to form a new association to promote the People's Charter; but this was opposed by the members of the Political Union, who carried their point by a large majority.

In aid of the Chartist cause, a publication entitled the *True Scotsman*, had recently been commenced in Edinburgh, the editor being Mr John Fraser. He and his daughters were subsequently known in musical circles as 'the Fraser Family.' An article, so exceedingly inflammatory in character, appeared in this paper in March, that serious disturbances were apprehended, and military were sent from Edinburgh to hold them in check. The doctrine of physical force, which was now being openly preached throughout the country, had found some disciples in Dundee, if we may judge from the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser* on Friday, April 12:—

'THE CHARTISTS.—A number of infatuated individuals have commenced drilling. It may be as well to intimate that the authorities are keeping a strict eye over them. Shackles in place of pikes will shortly be the upshot to those who engage in such dangerous pastimes.'

In March, the great 'National Convention' was held in London; and immediately following upon it serious disturbances broke out in Devizes, Birmingham, and the West of England, causing no little trouble and anxiety to the Government of the day. In Dundee, however, the agitation had so far been conducted on strictly constitutional lines.

On the evening of Tuesday, May 28, a meeting was held in the Thistle Hall, in order that Mr Burns might give an account of his stewardship. The *Courier's* account of this meeting was as follows:—

'We find in the columns of our contemporaries—but which, in disgust, we exclude from our own—reports of a Chartist meeting held here on Tuesday last. The "Convention," on a small scale, of the idle and dissolute portion of our community, was held for the purpose of hearing Burns, the basket-maker, the Chartist delegate, render an account of his stewardship. His "pike and faggot" address was sufficiently valorous, but sadly deficient of plain common sense. Burns's system seems first to be—to burn the factories, throw the people idle, occasion a revolution, and all this to obtain a great common good. The violence of the delegate was challenged by Mr Adam Stewart, who could not possibly understand how the burning of the factories could do good to the working classes, and he did not think it just to destroy any man's property although he was opposed to him in politics. Burns replied, that the inhabitants of Moscow burned the city before the approach of Bonaparte, not to allow Russia to fall under his dominion. Mr Buik answered, that the people of Moscow, when they did so, set fire to their own property, not to other people's. This fairly posed the agitator; but his adherents hissed his

opponents, and a vote of thanks for his conduct was carried by acclamation. Since then, the basket-maker has set out on a tour of agitation to the North. He was treated as a vagrant in Arbroath on Saturday, and had to decamp before the terrors of the law. This is an excellent hint to the police for the suppression of Chartist meetings. The itinerant preachers of sedition are all vagrants, and should be drummed out of every town the moment they appear. Burns, poor man, has more need to attend to the wants of his wife and family than to put his neck in risk of Tyburn.'

Other meetings were held in close succession during the year 1839, and at intervals during 1840. The proceedings at some of these meetings were exceedingly lively; and while the cause may be said to have been advanced somewhat, the state of matters was practically very much the same until towards the close of the latter year.

Near the close of the year 1840, serious and fatal disturbances occurred in Wales, which attracted attention all over the country. About 10,000 Chartists from the neighbouring mines, armed with guns, pikes, &c., arrived at Newport on the 4th of November. They divided themselves into two bodies—one, under the command of Mr John Frost, an ex-magistrate, proceeded down the principal street; while the other, headed by his son, took the direction of Stow Hill. They met in front of the Westgate Hotel, where the magistrates were assembled with about 30 soldiers of the 45th Regiment, and several special constables. The rioters broke the windows and fired on the inmates, by which the Mayor, Mr (afterwards Sir Thomas) Phillips, and several other persons were wounded. The soldiers returned the fire, and dispersed

the mob, which fled, leaving about 20 dead, and others wounded. Frost, Williams, and Jones were tried for their share in the proceedings, and were sentenced to death, the sentence being subsequently commuted to transportation for life.

CHAPTER III.

Proceedings before the Sheriff; a Futile Action for Damages; Conviction of Rioters; the Corn Laws; Manifesto by the Chartists; Counter Manifesto by the Magistrates; the Chartists checkmated; Indignation Meeting; Parliamentary Dissolution; Chartist Tactics; Visit of Feargus O'Connor; the Local Newspapers; Establishment of a Local Chartist Organ.

A new sensation was introduced into the agitation in Dundee by certain legal proceedings which were taken before the Sheriff in the beginning of 1841. Meetings were being constantly held, which were frequently very disorderly, and in some instances individuals were subjected to personal violence. Mr James Lowe, a well known character at this time, took a very active part at many of the meetings, and on one occasion at least—at a meeting held on Tuesday, February 9th, 1841—he was rather roughly handled. In consequence of this treatment, he brought an action of damages in the Sheriff Small Debt Court against Mr David Crichton, ship owner, as chairman of the meeting, and against Thomas Dempster, upholsterer, one of the Young Men's Church Society. The summons charged Mr Dempster with having assaulted Lowe at the meeting, torn his coat, and deprived him of his liberty; and it charged Mr Crichton, as chairman of the meeting, with having refused or failed to give Lowe protection. The damages were restricted to £8 6s. 8d. The action excited much interest, as an import-

ant public question was involved in it. After a protracted hearing, Mr Henderson, the Sheriff Substitute, before whom it was tried, decided against Lowe, considering that the alleged assault by Dempster had not been proved, and that Mr Crichton, as chairman of the meeting, could not be held responsible for the actual outrages committed by any of those attending the meeting, and over whom he had little or no control. Mr Lowe brought a similar action against three other persons, for injury done to his feelings and damage to his clothes, at the meeting in question; but Sheriff Henderson dismissed this action also, on the ground that the decision in the former action prevented any further procedure.

Several persons who had taken part in the rioting were tried by Sheriff L'Amy and a jury on March 27, and were sentenced to various periods of imprisonment.

A requisition, to which 57 signatures were attached, was addressed to Provost Johnston, on Thursday, May 13, 1841, requesting that he would call a meeting of the 'merchants, manufacturers, and ship owners of Dundee, on Wednesday, the 19th inst., in the Thistle Hall, at one o'clock, to consider the propriety of petitioning both Houses of Parliament in favour of the notice which has been given by Lord John Russell for an abolition of the present Corn Laws, and in favour of the measures introduced for a revision of the Import Duties.' The Provost complied with the requisition; but the Chartists had determined to follow the example which had been set them about that time by their brethren in other towns; and on Tuesday—the day before the meeting taking place—the following startling placard was largely posted through the town:—

‘CHARTISTS!

DYING STRUGGLE OF THE WHIGS!

‘A meeting has been called to be held in the Thistle Hall, on Wednesday first, at one o’clock, to petition in favour of Finality Jack for an alteration of the Corn Laws. Working Men! this is not a measure calculated to benefit your class; it is a scheme of the “base, bloody, and brutal Whigs,” to secure place and pension, and power to plunder and oppress you, as they have done for the last nine years. Remember the expatriation of the virtuous Frost and his companions—the jails of England and Wales crowded with your best friends—the murdered Clayton—and the suffering O’Brien and Peddie. Think upon the economy of the Whigs—the £20,000,000 to the owners of the Black Slaves—£70,000 for Royal stables, and an addition of £60,000,000 to the National Debt, and crowd to the Thistle Hall on Wednesday, to express your detestation of the most infamous Government that ever ruled in Britain. On your conduct now depends their existence. Be at your posts, then! Let the tale of your grievances ring in the ears of your oppressors—your motto be “The Charter and no Surrender!” but let peace and order mark the whole of your proceedings.

By Order of the DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL.

‘Dundee, May 18, 1841.’

This placard must have greatly alarmed the merchants. The Chartists of Edinburgh, in the previous week, had made a similar interference with a meeting convened for the same object, and the result was one of the most disgraceful scenes that had ever been witnessed at a public meeting in the Metropolis, the Chartists being successful in turning the meeting to their own purposes.

Fearing that the proposed meeting in the Thistle Hall would share a similar fate in consequence of the stirring appeal which had been made, the Magistrates at once issued the following proclamation:—

‘BY ORDER OF THE MAGISTRATES.

‘Whereas a meeting of merchants, manufacturers, and ship owners, in Dundee, has been called under a requisition to the Provost, and, by his authority, to be held in the Thistle Hall, Union Street, to-morrow, at one o’clock afternoon, for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament for an abolition of the Corn Laws, and for a revision of the Import Duties; and whereas a bill has been issued and posted through the town, headed “Chartists,” calling upon the working men of Dundee to crowd to the place of the proposed meeting—

‘The Magistrates think it incumbent upon them to warn all classes of the community that the proposed meeting has been called in a regular and legal manner; that it is a meeting of *certain classes*, specified in the notice, convened for a *special purpose*; and that no person, not of the classes so called to meet, is entitled to force himself into the meeting, or to interfere with or interrupt those called and entitled to attend; and that the doing so would amount to an offence against the laws, and would subject the parties offending to punishment. The Magistrates, therefore, trust that no attempt will be made to interfere with the proceedings of the said meeting; and hope that all well-disposed persons of the community will join with them in preserving order and the peace of the town.

WILLIAM BARRIE, Clerk.

Council Chambers.

‘Dundee, 18th May, 1841.’

Much excitement was occasioned on Wednesday forenoon, as it was fully expected that, notwithstanding the manifesto of the Magistrates, there would be a second edition of the Edinburgh Whig meeting. The Magistrates, in the course of the forenoon, were extremely active in taking the necessary precautions to defeat the intentions of the Chartists. At the hour of meeting, a considerable force of police and constables was placed in front of the Thistle Hall, so as to stop the entrance of any of the persons who, from their appearance, might be supposed to be disciples of the Charter. In order that the check might be complete, a well-known Radical was stationed along with the police to pronounce who should and who should not be allowed to enter the hall. About 50 Chartists presented themselves, but they were all refused admittance, and ordered to disperse, on penalty of apprehension for interrupting the public thoroughfare. From the decided measures adopted by the Magistrates, the meeting passed off very quietly, and without any attempt being made to divert it from the special purpose for which it had been called.

In the evening, the Chartists held a meeting in the Thistle Hall, for the purpose of expressing their opinion of the Corn Law agitation, and their indignation at having been excluded from the meeting in the forenoon. The following resolutions were adopted, after 'suitable' speeches had been delivered:—

‘That this meeting consider that every member of the community ought to be consulted on all matters affecting the general interest, and deem the conduct of the middle classes, at the meeting held in this hall to-day, despotic and tyrannical.

‘That it is the duty of the Magistrates of all well governed cities and burghs to afford equal protection to

all classes of the community, to the injury of none ; and, therefore, we are of opinion that the conduct of the Magistrates of Dundee, in excluding by "brute force" a large portion of the inhabitants from a meeting *to which they had been invited*, and where a question of great importance to them was to be discussed, merits the severest censure of all friends of good order and just rule.'

At the dissolution of Parliament which took place in June, in the same year, when Sir Henry Parnell retired from the representation of Dundee, the Chartists held several meetings, at which it was unanimously resolved that they would not support a candidate who was not favourable to the whole of the points of the Charter. They had a demonstration at the Magdalen Yard on the evening of Saturday, June 26, which Mr Kinloch, son of the late member, and who was one of the candidates, attended, and endeavoured to talk them over, by the assistance of Messrs Christie and Symon. Mr J. B. Smith, of Manchester, who had been induced to come forward as the Free Trade candidate, arrived in Dundee on the following Monday, and had two meetings with the Chartists the same day, at which he announced himself as an advocate of household suffrage, and favourable to other Chartist proposals. Mr George Duncan was the other candidate, on Conservative principles. At the election, Mr Kinloch declined to go to the poll, not to divide the Liberal interest ; but Mr Duncan was returned by a large majority.

In the ensuing election of Police Commissioners, in October, a strenuous effort was made to return Chartists to the Commission, but in this they were unsuccessful.

Mr Feargus O'Connor, the 'uncaged lion,' arrived in Dundee on Wednesday, Oct. 27, on his tour of agitation for 'the Charter, the whole Charter, and nothing but the Charter.' A large number of the working classes met him at the Craig Pier, and in the afternoon he addressed an audience of about 900 persons in Bell Street Hall. Mr O'Connor, in his address, deeply regretted the division that had taken place in the ranks of the Radicals, since his previous visit to Dundee, five years ago, and which had been the means of detaching from them such men as Bailies Christie and Symon. He strongly urged union as the source of all their power. In the evening, a soiree was held in the same place, at which about 1000 men and women were present, and Mr O'Connor addressed the meeting on various matters connected with the Charter.

As regarded the local newspaper press, the *Advertiser*, the *Courier*, and the *Warder* were dead set against the principles and the proceedings of the Chartists, and severely censured those eccentricities and excesses into which the more zealous of the party were occasionally led. The *Dundee Chronicle*, which had been published for a number of years by Mr George Milne, and latterly had a struggling existence, was the only newspaper published in the town which was at all favourable to the cause; and this organ had ultimately to succumb to the pressure of adverse circumstances, and that, too, at a time when the movements of the Chartists were exciting a more than usual amount of interest, and, indeed, of alarm in the public mind. The last number of the *Chronicle* was issued on Thursday, August 18, 1842. It was succeeded, however, on Friday, August 26, by the *Dundee Herald*, which pledged itself to support with energy the principles of Radicalism, Voluntaryism in Church Government, and the

‘principles of the People’s Charter in all their purity.’ The editor of this new organ of Chartism was Mr Peter Brown, who had formerly been the editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

CHAPTER IV.

Anti-Corn Law Demonstration; Great Meeting on the Magdalen Green; Mr Edward Baxter on his Mettle; Burning the Effigy of Sir Robert Peel; Renewed Dulness of Trade; Demonstration of Unemployed; Proposals for Relief; Instances of Fraud.

An endeavour was made by Mr Edward Baxter, in Feb. 1842, to get up an agitation in favour of the Anti-Corn-Law League. Of this the Chartists were not slow to take advantage, justly reckoning that if they lent their aid to the Corn-Law Repealers, they would be entitled to have theirs in return. In compliance with a requisition, the Provost called a meeting of the inhabitants, to be held on Monday, Feb. 28; and as the requisition had been very numerously signed, it was arranged to hold the meeting on the Magdalen Yard Green, as being preferable to the High Street. A day or two before the meeting came off, however, it transpired that an effigy of Sir Robert Peel was being prepared, for the purpose of being publicly burnt on the High Street, after the meeting. On learning of this intention, the Magistrates declined to have anything to do with the proceedings, and wrote a letter to Mr Edward Baxter, warning him and the other requisitionists, that if any disturbance of the peace occurred, while they would do everything in their power to prevent it, they would hold him responsible for the consequences, should the effigy be burnt as proposed.

The meeting took place on the Magdalen Green

notwithstanding, and was attended by a concourse of men and women, boys and girls—to the number, according to the *Advertiser*, of 10,000, but, according to the *Courier*, of only 4000. The number was considerable, however, considering that the weather was exceedingly boisterous and disagreeable, with showers of rain at intervals. On the platform were Messrs E. and W. Baxter, David M'Ewen, Alexander Easson, W. Moyes, and others; and immediately in front of it was the effigy intended to represent Sir Robert Peel. Mr Edward Baxter presided; and after an introductory address by him, a resolution was proposed by Mr Easson, seconded by Mr W. G. Baxter, and carried unanimously, to the effect that they considered Sir Robert Peel's measure 'an insult and mockery to a patient and long-suffering people.' The Rev. G. Gilfillan was the next speaker, and he proposed a resolution which declared that all Corn-Laws were condemned by the Word of God. This resolution was seconded by the Rev. R. Spence, and also carried unanimously. The next resolution, however, was doomed to meet with a different reception. Mr Baxter had recently made an avowal of Chartist principles, and the disciples of the Charter resolved to put him to the test. Mr Thos. Saunders moved, and Mr David M'Ewen seconded the following resolution:—

'That a memorial to the Queen, and a petition to Parliament, be presented from this meeting in accordance with these resolutions. The memorial to the Queen praying her Majesty to dismiss from her councils her present Ministers, as altogether incompetent and unwilling to conduct the affairs of this great nation on the firm principles of justice and morality.'

As an amendment to this resolution, the following was proposed by Mr John Duncan, described as 'a Chartist

preacher,' seconded by William Davidson, shoemaker, and carried by a large majority :—

‘That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the many evils of which the working classes of Britain have to complain, arise principally from class legislation, and will continue to exist in one form or another until the whole population above 21 years of age be in possession of the right of elevating men to represent them in the House of Commons, according to the plan of representation denominated “The People’s Charter;” and being convinced that the repeal of any bad law would fail to remedy the existing distress (so long as the power of law-making rests in the hands of the middle classes alone); and that it would be a profligate waste of the means and energies of the people, and a mockery of their miseries, to agitate for anything short of the full measure of their rights, hereby resolve to agitate for the enactment into law of the People’s Charter, and to give no countenance or support to any movement for a less measure of justice.’

This unexpected declaration of the meeting seemed rather to disappoint the Chairman and his Corn-Law associates; but they bore it with becoming philosophy. At the close of the proceedings at the Magdalen Green, the party returned in procession to the town; but, according to the *Conservative Courier*, this was anything but an imposing spectacle. ‘The demonstration was, in fact, a total failure. Instead of the brilliant display of flags we used to behold in the palmy days of Reform agitation, there were only two unfurled to the breeze; and these two were dirty, tattered rags. The procession into town was laughable in the extreme; and its ludicrous character seemed to be fully appreciated by the leaders of the demonstration, who slunk off in every direction but the shortest towards the town. The lads and boys bearing

the effigy of the Premier'—in which the *Courier* reporter discerned 'a striking picture of Dominic Hunter's wan, rigid features and uncouth body—and which, we understand, was dressed in a cast-off suit of Mr E. Baxter's—conveyed their precious burden to the High Street, where it was set on fire about half-past four o'clock, and immediately consumed. Thereafter the motley assemblage gradually left the street, and by half-past five all was order and quietness.'

For a year or two previous to the time of which we are now treating, the staple trade of the town had been very good, and work had been plentiful. About this period, however, there came a serious dulness of trade, so that large numbers of workmen were thrown out of employment; and, as usual, the working classes turned their attention to their political grievances as the cause of their sufferings. On Tuesday, May 17, the unemployed made a demonstration, which was thus described by the *Dundee Advertiser*:—

'THE UNEMPLOYED.—A large number of workmen of all descriptions paraded the town throughout the whole of Tuesday with banners and music. The first flag was a black one, and on it was inscribed: "We are hungry. Give us bread or labour, that we may feed ourselves by our own *indoustry*!" The inscription on the second one was a verse or two from Burns's "Man was made to Mourn." On the third was inscribed in legible letters, "The Charter, and nothing less!" And the last, to crown all, was a tri-coloured flag, with a hatchet on the top of it! The individuals who joined in this procession were generally of the most desperate description, and many of them are well known to the police officers.'

On the same day, a public meeting of the inhabitants,

convened by order of the Magistrates, was held in the Town Hall, to consider the state of the unemployed, and devise means for their relief—Provost Lawson presiding. From a statement that was submitted to the meeting, it appeared that the number of unemployed in the previous January was 926, while, from the lists given in two days previously, it had decreased to 595, although it was evident that the actual number of the unemployed and destitute had considerably increased since the beginning of the year. The whole of the funds that had formerly been subscribed for the relief of the necessitous had been expended, and several suggestions for the immediate relief of the destitute were offered. One was that collections should be taken at the various church doors, and another was that the community should submit to a voluntary assessment, say of 10 per cent., on the poor's assessment, as a more permanent means of meeting the state of destitution. Ultimately, on the suggestion of Mr W. Thoms, it was agreed that a collection should be made at all the churches in the town, and that an appeal should afterwards be made to the inhabitants; and a committee was appointed to carry out this arrangement, and to act along with the Magistrates in affording relief to the destitute.

A number of the unemployed were engaged in improving the Magdalen Yard Green, towards which the sum of £300 had just been received from the Lords of the Treasury, under the Act for the improvement of public walks in the neighbourhood of large cities and towns. Although a sum of about £600 altogether was expended in improving the Magdalen Yard Green by the unemployed labourers, the work actually effected could have been better done by contract, and for less than half the sum.

Another proposal made at this time for utilising the

labour of the unemployed was that they should be put to make roads to the top of the Law, similar to those on the Calton Hill, at Edinburgh, and should also be employed in ornamenting the hill with trees and shrubbery, so as to convert it into an attractive pleasure ground for the inhabitants. This suggestion, however, was not agreed to be carried out.

Several cases of fraud were brought under the notice of the committee, in which men who had been in the receipt of wages for work, professed to be unemployed, and obtained relief from the common fund. One case of this kind, in which a weaver, who had been in full employment during the week, attended on Saturday and received two shillings as one of the unemployed, was brought before the Magistrates, and the delinquent was sent to Bridewell for 20 days for his imposition.

CHAPTER V.

The Complete Suffrage Association; Proposals for Union with the Chartists declined; Distress in the Country; Proposed National Strike for the Charter; Great Meeting of Malcontents; a General Strike for the Charter resolved upon; Precautions by the Magistrates; Violent Speeches.

An endeavour was made in the month of Feb. 1842, to procure the co-operation of the Chartists of Dundee in furthering the objects of the 'Complete Suffrage Association,' which had been recently organised. This movement originated with Mr Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, a well known and highly respected member of the Society of Friends, and an ardent reformer. A leading object of the Complete Suffrage Association was to effect a union of the Anti-Corn-Law Repealers, of the middle classes, and

the Chartists, with a view to overthrowing the Conservative Government then in office. Copies of a declaration by Mr Sturge were industriously hawked about by some of the leading Radicals in the town for signatures among those of the middle classes as were tinged with Liberal opinions. The document advocated complete suffrage, rendering representation co-extensive with taxation; and it received the signatures of a considerable number of the Advanced Liberals, and of the supporters of Mr J. B. Smith at the late election.

The Chartists, however, firmly declined to become the tools of the Anti-Corn-Law League, as they considered they would render themselves, did they accept Mr Sturge's declaration, which only adopted one of the six points of the Charter. They, therefore, decidedly refused to become a party to it, and declared that they would accept nothing less than the whole Charter. A meeting of those favourable to the movement on behalf of Mr Sturge's declaration in favour of Universal Suffrage was held in Bell Street Hall on the evening of Tuesday, Feb. 15, at which Mr Thomas Saunders, merchant, presided; and it was agreed to form a branch of the Complete Suffrage Association for Dundee. The members of it consisted for the most part of the extreme Radical section of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and of the more strongly pronounced of the political dissenters.

With the string of Universal Suffrage added to their bow, the Corn-Law Repealers continued to give an airing to their favourite hobby, and on some occasions they in consequence came into unpleasant collision with the uncompromising Chartists. Thus, on the evening of Tuesday, July 26, the Rev. Mr Lowe, of Forfar, addressed a meeting in the Thistle Hall, under the auspices of the

Anti-Corn-Law Association, giving, as delegate from Forfar and Montrose to the Anti-Corn-Law Conference which had been holding its sittings in London in the early part of the month, an account of what had occurred at the famous interview with Sir Robert Peel. The *Courier* observes :

‘ The reverend gentleman was listened to by a crowded meeting with the greatest patience, but without one single cheer to help him forward. At the conclusion of his speech, the Chartists, with which the hall was mostly filled, proceeded to propose resolutions, in their own peculiar manner, declaring their belief that the only remedy for the existing distress lay in adopting the People’s Charter ; which the Chairman refusing to put, he was deposed, another appointed, and their resolutions passed, amid considerable noise and confusion, in the midst of which the unfortunate Repealers decamped.’

The proceedings of the Chartist party assumed a character in the month of August which was very menacing to the peace of the town. Great distress still existed all over the country, owing to the bad trade which had been experienced for so long a period, and the consequent low rate of wages which were generally paid. In several of the manufacturing districts of England, where work was not so scarce, strikes for higher wages took place, and serious riots were the result, which required the active intervention of the military. Similar disturbances took place among the miners and colliers in the neighbourhood of Airdrie, and detachments of foot and cavalry soldiers had to be sent off from Edinburgh by special train to quell the outbreaks. The masons in Glasgow had been out on strike for several weeks, because of the master builders having determined to reduce the wages from

22s. to 18s. weekly; and the places of a large number of the men on strike had been filled by operatives from Dundee, of whom a large number had been for some time idle, in consequence of the inactivity in building operations. In Dunfermline, a threatened reduction in the wages of the weavers had led to serious rioting, mobbing, assault, and the calling out of the military.

With such distressing occurrences in the various manufacturing districts, the spirit of insubordination was not difficult to be aroused in Dundee—the initiative being taken by the Council of the Democratic Society. On Tuesday, Aug. 16, a meeting was held in Bell Street Hall, ‘to consider the present alarming state of the country, and to devise means for raising the standard of wages up to what it was in 1839.’ After due consideration, the only means that could be devised toward this end was the Charter. At this meeting, resolutions were passed recommending that all those in employment should make a demand on their employers to raise their wages to what they were in 1839; and, the employers failing to do so, ‘to take such steps as will compel them to yield to their demand.’

Detailing the means by which effect was sought to be given to these resolutions, the *Dundee Courier* records as follows:—

‘On Friday evening, a meeting of real or assumed delegates from the public works was held in a public room in Pullar’s Close, Murraygate. We are informed that a number of the greatest spinning mills and manufactories refused to elect delegates to attend this convention, and that a few present dissented from the resolution adopted—namely, to make a general strike for the Charter, to join what is called the “National Strike” for this purpose.

Notwithstanding this division in the camp, the majority, composed entirely of Chartists, resolved to call a meeting of "the masses," to be held on the Magdalen Green on the following evening; and in pursuance of this resolution, the following placard was posted on the walls of the town on Saturday forenoon:—

"EXTRAORDINARY MEETING.

NATIONAL STRIKE FOR THE CHARTER.

"At the GREAT DELEGATE MEETING, held in the School Room, Pullar's Close, on the evening of Friday, the 19th inst., it was decidedly ascertained that the vast numbers of workmen, of all the trades in Dundee, represented by the assembled delegates, with the exception of a very few workmen, agreed to STRIKE for the PEOPLE'S CHARTER.—In accordance with the will of the delegates,

A PUBLIC MEETING

will be held on the Magdalen Green, this evening, at half-past six o'clock, for the purpose of consulting the whole of the people in regard to the means to be adopted for carrying their will into operation.

The Voice of the People is the Voice of God.

A Collection will be made to Defray Expenses.

BY ORDER OF THE DELEGATES.

"Dundee, August 20, 1842."

'Previous to this, the Magistrates, who were aware of what was going forward, enrolled a considerable number of the lieges as special constables, and were in communication with Colonel Winchester, in command of the 92d Regiment, presently stationed in our barracks. Every other precaution which the circumstances could suggest

was adopted, and our active Superintendent of Police, Mr Mackison, used every exertion to render his force as effective as possible.

‘The meeting of malcontents took place as announced, at the Magdalen Yard, at half-past six P.M. on Saturday; but, to the great chagrin of the unprincipled fellows who have endeavoured to hoodwink the lower classes, the attendance was less than that anticipated. Nevertheless, the meeting was far from contemptible in point of numbers (1000), and fully justified the precautions against riot taken by the Magistracy. The rostrum from which the speakers poured forth sedition and blasphemy was of a novel description. Unable to defray the expense of a wooden erection, the patriots were obliged to resort to the use of a cart; and we are at a loss to say whether or not we felt most pity for the deluded multitudes, or for the poor “galled jade” which had to sustain the burden of the orators. We wish not to speak harshly of any portion of the suffering poor, but we cannot but condemn the unprincipled demagogues who goad the ignorant on to the commission of outrages against the law, which they well know must bring on their victims suffering and distress, and the ruin of the trade by which they live, if, indeed, they have the good fortune to escape the severe pains of law. Such ruffians live on the vitals of the people, and upon them ought the lash of the law to descend. The speeches delivered were, of course, “filled with indignation” against the Magistrates, for daring, in the exercise of their duty, to watch for, and, if necessary, to put down, any symptoms of riot and disorder which might be shown. Their violence in other respects the reader may conceive. The final resolution of the meeting was to conduct themselves orderly for that night, to agree to a general strike for the Charter, and to assemble

at the same place on Monday morning at five o'clock—then and there to determine what steps should be taken for the purpose of forcing the people employed at the different spinning mills, factories, &c., in town, to join them in their unconstitutional conduct. The meeting then formed in procession, with the cart in front, and proceeded to the High Street, where, seeing themselves strictly watched by the police, constables, &c., the valiant Chartists quietly and gradually dispersed. The Magistrates, justly apprehending further danger from the character of the resolution adopted, persevered in the enrolment of constables; and on no former occasion has the same cheerful acquiescence with their wishes been shown by our townsmen.

‘On Sunday morning, the Magistrates, considering that the peace of the town was endangered by the threat held out at the meeting on the previous evening, met together for the purpose of considering what further steps should be taken for preserving order. Sir John Ogilvy and other Justices attended during the day; and after interviews with the principal mill-spinners, it was resolved that a number of the well-disposed workmen should be sworn as special constables, in order that the safety of the works with which they were connected should be secured. This wise proposition was, we are glad to say, responded to, both by the mill-owners and their principal servants, in such a manner that all idea of danger from the movements of the Chartists in that respect was removed. The police officers, constables, shore porters, &c., were summoned to be at their posts on Monday morning at four o'clock; and we are glad to state, to the honour of the civil force, the turn-out was such as it ought to have been.

‘The shore porters were drawn up in a body, at five

o'clock, in front of the Town House, and presented a formidable appearance, while the Chartists from the east end of the town were proceeding towards the rendezvous. The meeting, for the early hour, was well attended, about 700 being present. The usual rhetoric was produced; but from the knowledge of the preparations made to meet any movement on the part of the Chartists, the features of the leaders appeared to be considerably elongated, and the style of their orations was that of men who knew that their attempt was utterly hopeless. It was utterly ridiculous, indeed. This was apparent from the fact, that while the old idea of turning out the hands in the various mills was entertained, the leaders—a tailor and several mongrel patriots—adjourned the meeting till twelve o'clock, to wait the arrival of a Mr Mitchell and a reinforcement from Kirriemuir and Forfar, when they would again deliberate on ulterior measures. The cart once more moved slowly from the ground; the Chartists took a sidelong glance of the police and constables on the High Street, and slipped off quietly to breakfast. We hope they had a good one.

‘At twelve o'clock, the same scene was enacted on the Magdalen Green, although the attendance was more numerous, amounting, with men, boys, women, and children, to almost 2000. The tailor then presided, and proved himself more than nine-tenths of a man. Mr John Duncan, Chartist preacher, then addressed the crowd in a monotonous but insidious speech, in which he railed in the strongest terms against the Magistrates, the clergy, the military, the police, and the constabulary. He began by exhorting the people to persevere in the glorious struggle for liberty (?) which they had just commenced; but to preserve order, and refrain from the destruction of property, that they might not fall into the blood-hound

hands of the police, the constables, or the military. He demanded to know why, when the people were struggling for their rights, and for sustenance, the clergy, who were especially interested in the welfare of the poor, did not give their countenance and aid in the advancement of the glorious cause of the Charter? A tirade of vile abuse followed against clergymen in general, which was appropriately wound up by the sweeping assertion that they were nothing else than *mis-sworn infidels*. Duncan then proceeded to inveigh against the Magistracy, who, instead of encouraging the cause of justice and humanity, had actually the effrontery to call down against the people the rage of a blood-thirsty body of murderers in the military, the police, and the constables. If the Magistrates did their duty, they would instantly join the people; send a statement to the Queen that, unless the Charter were granted, they could not be responsible for the peace and safety of the town; and if this were followed by the voice of the middle classes of society, the Charter would be easily obtained. Were this happy end attained, there would be no necessity for putting double shutters on provision shop windows, as had been done in Dundee, or of removing cheese, &c., from their doors, in order that they might not be stolen. Duncan continued to harangue in the same strain for a considerable time, and concluded with another admonition to the people to keep order, but at the same time on no account to communicate their intentions to any one who was not a sworn friend of the Charter. Other pop-guns followed the preacher, and the resolution come to by the meeting was to adjourn until this day [Tuesday] at ten o'clock. The spirit of the Chartists seemed to be greatly damped by the total failure of their attempt to stir up commotion in the town, and all left the meeting with doleful, chop-fallen countenances,

and slunk away from the High Street as soon as they reached it.

‘Last night, about seven o’clock, a crowd began to assemble on the High Street; but from the listless and dispirited appearance of the workmen, not the slightest interference on the part of Magistrates or officers was necessary. Indeed, the wise policy of allowing the bubble to burst has proved most admirably effective. The truth, however, is, that had not the Chartists been overawed by the number and efficiency of the civil force, much mischief might have happened. The crowd very quietly dispersed. . . .

‘Notwithstanding the boasted unanimity of the working classes in regard to a general strike, all the spinning mills, carpenters’ yards, &c., were at work, not one of the hands being absent.’

The *Warder* gave some additional details of the exciting events of these two days, and from its report we quote the following :—

‘During the entire of Sabbath, great excitement and enthusiasm pervaded the town. The front of the Town House was crowded to a late hour at night by many of the most respectable citizens, all anxious to render every assistance by co-operating with the Magistrates to preserve the peace. A great number of workmen came voluntarily forward and were sworn as special constables; and the usual solemnity of our Sabbath was so far disturbed as to resemble more a market-day than anything else. The arrangements for preserving the peace of the town were very complete, and the strongest determination was felt and expressed by all vigorously to repress any attempt at disturbance.

‘The turn-out on Monday morning in the Magdalen

Green proved a complete failure. Five o'clock was the hour to assemble; and from that time up to six, there were not above 2000 present at one time, and more than the one-half of these, we believe, were mere spectators. About six—the hour at which the mills generally commence work—squads of workmen began gradually to leave the ground; and the number at that time fell off at least one-half. A tailor named Ross was elected preses, and addresses were delivered by him, James Clark, and Thomas Anderson. Clark's speech consisted principally of comments on the Magistrates and the endeavours that were made by them to preserve the peace. He declared that they (the Chartists) intended no injury to either person or property—that they were not to go round the mills and intimidate the men; but he advised his brethren, wherever any of them knew of an acquaintance working, to endeavour to prevail on him to leave off. He read a long letter in the *Northern Statesman*, from Brontierre O'Brien, to the Chartists of England and Scotland, advising them to stand out for the Charter.

‘A little after seven, the procession left the Magdalen Yard, with the intention of proceeding towards the east of the town, to meet a great body of Chartists expected from Forfar, Kirriemuir, and other places. A delegate had been despatched on Sabbath to rouse the Chartists in those districts, and to have them forward at an appointed hour. When the procession passed the Town House, on their way to the east, their number might be about 200, amongst which were a number of mere boys, and a few young women. As they passed the churches [the East and South Churches, which were then being rebuilt, after the fire], some yelling was set up at the masons, but without having any other effect than raising a laugh at the expense of the miserable turn-outs. The messenger, how-

ever, failed to have forward his forces from Forfar, &c., at the appointed time ; and pretty broad insinuations were given out by some of them that there was little confidence to be placed in him—that, in all likelihood, the money he got to defray his expenses only carried him as far as the first public-house on the way, and that search should be made on the road-side, where it was not improbable he was enjoying a sound nap in some retired spot. Seeing there was no aid at hand, and knowing their own weakness, they came to a resolution to break up, and meet again at twelve o'clock on the Magdalen Green.

‘ When the procession had passed the Town House, a compact body of stout policemen were observed marching down Reform Street, and into the High Street, where they continued for a considerable time. The Sheriff, Provost, Magistrates, and other authorities were all present in the High Street. The special constables were also collected in different districts of the town, and in readiness to act ; and altogether things were so judiciously arranged that a force at least ten times that which at present appeared would have been easily matched and dispersed. The military, to about 300, were in readiness, in Dudhope Barracks, to act had their services been required. A considerable number of those belonging to the strike came back to the High Street, and continued loitering there till about twelve o'clock, when they dispersed for the second meeting at the Magdalen Green.

‘ This meeting was better attended than the one in the morning. There might be about 2000 or 2500 when at its best ; but almost all apparently belonged to the working classes. The most of the factories in town were stopped, which, we understand, was not an unusual case on Mondays, and will perhaps account for the extra turn out. The same person was called to the chair who occupied it

in the morning. After an address from the Chairman, the meeting was addressed by Mr John Duncan, who in as strong language as he had used at the meeting on Saturday night, conjured them to keep the peace. The clergy received a chastisement from Mr Duncan for not taking part in the present movement. He alluded to the great wealth that many of the clergy possessed in England and Scotland, and condemned their injustice in not setting aside the corner of their fields, and the outer branches of their trees, as the Jews were commanded to do of old, for the poor. He advised his hearers to pay no stipends or seat rents, in order that these "irreverend infidels" might be put in a condition to get to that kingdom reserved for the poor alone. Strong caution was administered by him to his hearers against allowing themselves to be entrapped into the many snares that were laid for them by the police. It had been reported that he himself had received a summons to attend as a special constable, and that, on his refusal to do so, the penalty had been inflicted; nay, that he was even immured in the walls of the prison. These reports he considered as just so many feelers thrown out by their enemies to entrap them into a violation of the peace. If they met a band of the police, he advised his friends to go to the other side, in case, by the snares laid by these men, their foot might slip, and happening to fall unawares on the police, be the very thing the police wanted as an opportunity for falling on them.'

CHAPTER VI.

Another Meeting on the Magdalen Green; Speeches by John Duncan and John Mitchell; Imposing Procession; Interference of the Police; the Riot Act Read; March to Lochee; Muster on the Fair Muir; March to Forfar; Incidents by the Way; Proceedings in Forfar.

A crisis in these extraordinary proceedings was reached on the following day (Tuesday), and culminated in what is known in local history as the famous 'Pilgrimage of Folly, or the Chartist March to Forfar.' The proceedings of a day most eventful in the annals of the Chartist movement commenced with another meeting on the Magdalen Green, at which about 4000 persons assembled. The *Warder* continues :

'Mr DUNCAN spoke at considerable length, recommending a fixed and undeviating plan of operations. He regretted the absence of many friends that day, seeing that a decisive step was to be taken. Some there might be amongst them who would sell their own liberties, and the liberties of others, for a miserable £50, with situations as police sergeants into the bargain. He would not advise a procession, as had been proposed, until he was assured it was legal; but small deputations might be got to do the business. As a means of attaining their object—the People's Charter—he recommended a run on all the Banks, particularly the Savings Banks, whose deposits he did not conceive worth more than a halfpenny a pound—and the establishment of a people's bank, on a mutual understanding between the middle and the working classes; so that the regular banker's business would be ruined, and he would be compelled to join for the Charter.'

‘Mr JOHN MITCHELL next gave an account of his mission to Forfar and Kirriemuir. He had attended an enthusiastic meeting of about 1000 people on the Market Muir at Forfar on Sunday. Next morning they paraded the streets, bearing the cap of Liberty on a pole. The Forfarians were clannish, desperate devils, and would act in concert with them. He was equally gratified with his visit to Kirriemuir—all the district, in fact, would stand by Dundee, a town which stood exactly in the same relation to Scotland which Manchester did to England. He concluded by observing, that they had as much right to the streets as the Council had, if they judged it proper to have any procession.

‘Messrs THOMAS ANDERSON and JAMES PRYDE followed—the latter, in conclusion, proposing that the meeting should form themselves into a procession for the purpose of parading the streets of the town, with a view of civilly requesting (through a deputation of eight of their number) the men in the different public works to strike work and join them—a motion which was hailed with cheers by the multitude.

‘A procession, composed of about half the number on the Green, was accordingly marshalled, and proceeded toward the Perth Road, from thence, passing up the road on the east side of St Peter’s Church, to the Hawkhill, they commenced sending the deputation into all the public works on the way—the main body halting till the deputation came out. At the Hawkhill, a number of young females commenced taking their places in front, and marched in warlike array, jeering their companions as they passed to come and join them. Several of the factories turned out hands to join the movement; and when the procession had reached Hunter Street, near the

bottom of the Hawkhill, they formed a dense mass, covering the whole face of the Hawkhill to the westward. Here, however, their career, which had hitherto been one of complete triumph, met a severe check. The police authorities, in considerable numbers, backed by the special constables, met the procession just before they had got the length of the opening into Hunter Street. Bailies Gray and Reid, along with Superintendent Mackison, advanced in front, and ordered a halt. The police then, with admirable tact and regularity, at the word of command, so lengthened their line as to form a complete barricade across the street. At this time the rioters were all in front of the authorities. After the Bailies and the Superintendent had remonstrated for a few minutes with the leaders, an order was given for the police to fall back on one side and allow the rioters to pass. This the rioters no doubt looked upon as a kind of victory, and those in front began to proceed down Hunter Street towards the numerous works in that direction. When nearly the half of their number had got into Hunter Street, an order was given for the police to close in as before, which completely divided the rioters into two halves. Perceiving the manœuvre of the police, and that they were thus cut off from their neighbours, those in the rear began instantly to ascend the Hawkhill, and moving down one of the lanes to the north, soon joined their brethren. Another body of police and constables, headed by Bailies Anderson and Hean, coming round by the Scouringburn, here met the rioters; and the two opposing forces—the police, constables, shore porters, &c.—marched on one side of the street, and the rioters, four men deep, on the other.

‘An excellent opportunity was here afforded of surveying the relative strength of the parties. The rioters, with few exceptions, were what is generally known by the

name of *lads*—neither men nor boys, averaging perhaps from 16 to 20 years of age. There were, no doubt, among them many who had attained 30, or, it may be, 40 years of age; but these were particularly few, the great mass being mere striplings. They carried no weapons in their hands, nor did their conduct indicate, so far as we saw, any disposition to be the first to come to blows. Opposed to them, headed by Lord Duncan, Bailies Anderson, Gray, Reid, and Hean, Sheriff Henderson, and the Superintendent of Police, marched a numerous body of constables and policemen, some of whom, for breadth of shoulder and strength of arm, might be matched against any set of men to be found in all the three adjoining counties. They were all armed. Those who had not regular police batons flourished huge, unpolished pitch-pine treenails, which, if necessary, might have served the double purpose of a torch at one end, and at the other as a powerful weapon of destruction. Add to this, that, combined with their “might,” they had “right” on their side—that their object was to protect property, and promote the peace of the community—these things considered, there could be little doubt on which side the chances of victory lay.

‘On the procession arriving at Edward’s Mill, shouts and yells were raised, but the doors being closed, and no admission allowed to the deputation, the whole body passed on till they arrived at Mitchell’s Mill. The deputation having entered, a good deal of shouting took place. When they came out, the rioters, who had hitherto kept pretty steady in their ranks, began to exhibit symptoms of disorder; and when they had got to the top of the hill fronting Dudhope Church, there were considerable confusion and noise. A short consultation of the authorities here took place; and by a well executed movement of

the police, a circle was formed, enclosing about 20 of the rioters, to whom Sheriff Henderson read the Riot Act. Large placards were instantly raised on poles, announcing what had taken place, and intimation given for them to disperse at once. A dead halt took place, and the rioters for some time seemed determined to keep their ground, though no disposition to proceed to acts of violence was evinced by them. Lord Duncan, Sheriff Henderson, and the other authorities, did everything in their power, both by friendly expostulation and command, to prevail on them to disperse; but to little effect. Seeing the impossibility of getting back to town, a cry was raised by those in front to proceed to Lochee; and in a short time the whole body moved off in that direction. After waiting some time, the authorities returned to town, where it was immediately given out that the Riot Act had been read.

‘The first place visited in Lochee by the mob was the Quarry Mill, which a deputation entered, and requested the foremen to turn out the men. The request was, of course, not complied with; but it being now near the dinner hour, the mills began to turn out for that purpose, and, instead of going home, the men assembled in crowds, and were addressed by various of the rioters. Lord Duncan, on hearing in Dundee that they were in the vicinity of his property, set off on horseback to the scene. His Lordship, on arriving near the Quarry Mill, after expostulating with the mob, read the Riot Act. After a short time spent in speechifying, a motion was made to adjourn to the Fair Muir, in which direction they speedily set off, carrying in front a white banner. On arriving at the Fair Muir, a halt was called, Pryde was elected chairman, and Mitchell detailed the plan of intended operations. They were to proceed to Forfar, and, after being joined

by the "Forfarians and Kirriemarians," to commence their march round the farmers, and ask assistance.

'Being formed into sections of twenties, they began the march to Forfar. At this time they numbered about 500, but had not gone far when they were joined by nearly 400 from Dundee; this, with numerous other smaller sections by which they were from time to time augmented, might make the number who actually set off to Forfar about 1200. They had not proceeded far, however, ere the purity of the principles of their leaders as to interfering with other people's property came to be tested. It was now four o'clock in the afternoon, and numbers had got no food since they left home in the morning. The cravings of nature insensibly but powerfully began to subdue the small remnant of moral principle by which they pretended to be guided. Several fields of turnips lay on either side of the road—the bait was found to be too tempting—first one, then another, leaped the fences, and returned to the ranks concealing the prize as well as they could. Pryde, Mitchell, and others did what they could to prevent them; but ultimately the greater part burst into a field, and did considerable damage, destroying more with their feet than they actually carried away for the purpose of devouring. The order they had set off in being now destroyed, was never again recovered.

'On resuming their march, a farm-house lay in front, to which a deputation proceeded, and returned with three shillings, which they had received from the inmates. The next farm-house was visited by a party of about 20, who were considerably in advance of the main body. A supply of bread and milk was here given, which the twenty, as was to be expected, sat down and devoured. On the main body coming up, considerable indignation was

expressed at the selfishness of the twenty appropriating to themselves what was intended for the whole ; and had they not speedily retreated to the rear, they would probably have met with pretty severe treatment for their conduct. Their next depredation was committed on a young plantation, into which they entered, and armed themselves with sticks, destroying great numbers of young trees. A fine field of turnips lay on the other side of the road, into which an inroad was made. After this they got into complete confusion, and it drawing near to dusk, a good many began to fall back and return to town. So much did they fall off from this, that only about 400 reached Forfar, which they entered next morning about three o'clock. The authorities in Forfar were, however, prepared for them ; and on the rioters arriving at the Town House, they were stopped by the Magistrates and constables. They continued standing in the streets from that hour till ten o'clock, when a meeting was held. They then commenced their march homewards, accompanied by their friends in Forfar a short distance. During the after part of Wednesday they were seen in parties coming into Dundee, wearied with the fatigues of their journey, and downcast with its miserable result.'

The above is a plain, sober narrative, as given in a by no means friendly local journal at the time. It is written in the usual newspaper style, without any apparent attempt at either embellishment or exaggeration ; and the probability is that, being written from information obtained on the spot and at the time of occurrence, after careful inquiry, the various statements made are strictly correct. A highly coloured and one-sided account of the memorable 'March to Forfar' was written many years afterwards by Mr James Myles, and published by him in

his well known work, *Rambles in Forfarshire*. Mr Myles's narrative is exceedingly interesting, and contains some picturesque description, interspersed with very amusing incidents, most graphically told. It is to be feared, however, that, in his desire to ridicule the misguided men who took part in this foolish expedition, Mr Myles has not adhered quite closely to facts, and has imported a little of the element of romance into his version of the affair, notwithstanding his positive assurance to the contrary. With this hint as to the advisability of the reader mixing fully more than the proverbial grain of salt with Mr Myles's highly seasoned narrative, it is worth producing here, along with the matter-of-fact newspaper report. The following is his account of the 'march,' somewhat abridged:—

'The reader will now accompany me to the Murraygate, as here is situated a dingy room that recalls to the mind scenes of little political comedies, and ebullitions of popular ignorance that deserve, from their unique moral physiology, to be duly criticised and recorded. Enter Pullar's Close, and immediately in front you will observe a narrow dirty stair. Ascend this stair, enter the first door on your left hand, and you will find yourself in a small gloomy room, where sufficient light struggles through a few cobweb-covered windows, to make darkness visible. Some half dozen forms are lying about as if chaos itself had arranged them, and the walls around might be conceived as equal in blackness to that terrible place over whose gate was inscribed, "Resign all hope, ye who enter here." If these dirty walls were gifted with speech, they could some "tales unfold." . . . In one word, reader—and need I say more?—this is the chamber of the Chartist Council—the skep where the honey of the rump of O'Connor democracy was collected, and around

which fluttered drones, demagogues, and fools. . . . In the autumn of 1842, a wildly Quixotic expedition was solemnly proposed and discussed by this sapient conclave; and as its finale reveals an amount of grotesque folly, fun, and ignorance, rarely equalled, it may be useful and interesting to pen its history.

‘On the evening in question, an extraordinary meeting of Council was convened, the room was crowded, and all were excited as if they were on the verge of great events. Oh that I could vividly paint the scene! Imagine a low-roofed sinister-looking chamber crowded with men who gloried in exhibiting “unwashed faces and unshorn chins,” who, in their zeal for liberty, disdain to curtail the liberty of their beards, and, amidst their fervent animosity to aristocracy, showed an equal animosity to cleanliness. A dark, motley batch of reformers were the defunct “bristle and snout” Council. When busy settling the affairs of the nation, they were also busy smoking tobacco; and it required extra visual organs to discover either chairman or orator, amidst the pestiferous atmosphere of smoke. Elevated on a rickety bench, the president, if he could not be seen, might be heard now and then striking the table and vociferating, “Order there, billies!” while some genius, big with a great idea, would start to his feet, pluck the pipe from his mouth, and dash into a new scheme for gaining the Charter. Then the rafters would tremble with the terrific thumping of their iron-clad heels, and the whole ended by the creation of a little more smoke, which perhaps had been intended as a constant emblem of the termination of all their schemes.

‘Such was the aspect of the Council on the night in question, when a member of the name of Mitchell, now in America, rose and stated, that in Dundee there were 4000 men unemployed, that they had failed in obtaining

relief from the Magistrates, and they had decided on throwing themselves on the country, alarming the country gentlemen, and thereby forcing their destitution on the attention of the community, and obtaining food. This programme for the unemployed had been decided on at a delegate meeting in Forfar, and Mitchell contended that the Chartists ought to join them, and abstain from work until the Charter became the law of the land! How a few obscure denizens of Bonnie Dundee could revolutionise the country by turning out to the fields, living on beans and turnips, and sleeping amongst the heather, patriot Mitchell did not deign to explain; yet his bedlamite proposal was seconded by a brother reformer, since dead; and the Council discussed it nearly two hours, but ultimately they, by a majority, decided against it, though, as will be seen in the sequel, they nearly all acted as officers, guides, and orators, in the notorious march to Forfar.

‘On the following Saturday, a public meeting was held on the Magdalen Yard Green, connected with the unemployed. About 8000 were present, and Mitchell again proposed that they should solemnly engage to abstain from work until the Charter became the law of the land. The proposal was seconded and almost unanimously carried. A few sensible men spoke against it, but they were shortly silenced by a general yell of execration, and the infatuated mob, led on by Mitchell and others, decided on meeting on the following Monday morning, to urge a cessation from labour, and proceed to Forfar, where they expected to be joined by a host of friends from the neighbouring towns. . . .

‘On the Monday morning, according to appointment, a huge crowd of the idle, the dissolute, and the foolish, collected on the Magdalen Yard, but the prime leader, patriot Mitchell, was not present. Recruiting parties were

despatched to the different public works to try and swell the numbers, and a deputation went in search of Mitchell, who was found hiding in his mother's house. In the meantime, John Duncan—a well-meaning man, known in Dundee as a Chartist preacher, but now dead—exerted himself to bring the mob to something like reason, but his efforts were almost in vain. They, after a few choice harangues from their leaders, formed themselves in the order of military procession, and, headed by their generals, passed up one of the lanes to the Perth Road and Hawk-hill, with the intention of summoning the workmen engaged at the mills in the Scouringburn to surrender, and assist them in gaining the Charter. The authorities had all the principal works well guarded with police and special constables; and the “Imperial” army marched on without accomplishing a single deed of valour to perpetuate their heroic renown. On arriving at Dudhope Church, a strong body of police divided them, kept back one half, and captured one of their generals—a valiant knight of the needle and scissors. Here the Riot Act was read by the Provost; and while he was reading it, a young lad took up a large stone and was about to hurl it at his head, but was prevented by one of the crowd, who had more prudence, and who now thinks shame of the part he played in the comedy. The section of the mob that the police were unsuccessful in stopping now marched on to Lochee, with a solitary torn flag floating in the breeze. They had a melancholy and repulsive appearance. Such an array of ragged hair-brained mortals never was seen. Not a respectable-looking working man was in their ranks; and on their approach to the village, the very children, it is said, fled from them in terror, believing them to be a band of tinkers!

‘The leaders, or rather generals—Messrs Gammon,

Fudge, and Bluster, as I shall call them, having no wish to mention their real names—ordered an attack on the East Mill, Lochee. They drew up in order of battle opposite the mill, sent a deputation to the manager, and demanded an unconditional surrender of his forces. The manager told them to make the attack, as he knew his men would defend themselves. The enemy now learned that all the male workers had been made special constables, and the generals ordered a retreat, having only captured a single mortal, of diminutive proportions, whom they at once dubbed the “little corporal.” General Fudge here mounted a dyke, and *viva voce* delivered his order of the day. While engaged in this duty, Lord Duncan made his appearance and was at once taken prisoner by General Gammon. A council of war was then held to consider what they could do with a living Lord; and after a little discussion, it was decided that such a prisoner was of no use. Accordingly, his Lordship was dismissed with a serious hint, that, as he was a Lord, he ought to think shame of himself for intruding his aristocratic person amongst a chosen band of whole hog Imperialists.

‘The army now marched through the fields of Dryburgh until they came to the Fair Muir. Here they halted, and patriot Mitchell mounted a stone dyke and informed them that the men of Forfar and Kirriemuir were to meet them on Lorn’s Hill; and then, said the impostor, “we will have an army so numerous that it will carry everything before it.” The misguided men trusted the knave, and amidst cheering and waving of bonnets, turned to the north, some of them armed with a “rung,” others with a broom “cow,” but none of them with money and meat. When they left the Fair Muir they numbered about 400, and amongst this mass there were only about 40 unem-

ployed men—showing, as already remarked, that the foolish demonstration was purely a political one, the object being the gaining of the People's Charter. They continued their march, and on coming to Powrie they commenced levying "black mail." Two generals visited the farmer of Powrie and commanded him to make porridge in his horses' boiler to feed their forces. The farmer declined, but kindly presented them with 3s. 6d. The army, on reaching Fithie Water Bridge, decided on a few minutes' repose to rest their weary limbs. A field of turnips being close by formed a strong inducement to them to stop here; and after supplying themselves with one each, they stretched themselves on the grass whilst General Bluster, anxious to inspire the drooping spirits of his turnip conquering heroes, mounted the parapet of the bridge, and with stentorian voice delivered the following address:—

"Fellow men, we're in the field at last, an' there maun be nae flinchin'! I hae aften walket by the dykesides an' dutches seekin' for the cause o' oor misery. Did I find it there? No! I hae even mounted to the tap o' the Law an' looket to the stars for the cause o' a' oor poverty. Did I find it there? No! I hae looket up to London to a Parliament as rotten as ony o' the neeps you're chawn' at. Did I find it there? Yes. Fellow men, yes. I hae read plenty history, an' I assure you there's *nae fowk wrought like the fowk o' this world!* Look, sae; the fields are covered wi' plenty, an' there's a mill doon there—[pointing to Windy Mill]—an' there's anither up there—[pointing to Tealing]—an' foo sud we starve in a land o' plenty? We maun jist help oorsel's, freends. Sae, up, my brave billies—the Charter, an' nae surrender!"

'At the termination of Bluster's heroic oration to his soldiers, a legion of turnip shaws and bonnets were thrown

up in the air, a wild cheer was given, and the army continued its march, whilst a wag, gifted with a strong pipe, amused himself whistling, as if in mockery, "See the conquering hero comes." During the performance of the latter scene a foraging deputation was despatched to a neighbouring farm, headed by General Fudge. On their return, the gallant General ascended a cairn of metal, and announced to his brethren in arms, that the tyrant farmer would give no money; "but," concluded the worthy, "he'll gi'es a' as muckle soor milk as we like to drink." Oh! shades of the mighty warriors of old, did you not make the domes of your airy homes ring with peals of derisive laughter when you heard the buckram general announce to his army that he had failed in obtaining bread, but had found a plentiful supply of *sour milk*? After all, may we not conclude that the most appropriate artillery to disperse and satisfy such soldiers would have been a batch of farmers' wives armed with bannocks and cogs of sour milk?

'On the army arriving at Tealing, they halted and cut down a quantity of branches as a substitute for better arms, and a few of them scoured the country around for provender. While here, it was whispered by some of their jackals that mine host of the Tothills had a fine display of cheese basking in his window before the sun. The information was too good news not to have a moving influence upon the patriots. Accordingly, they rushed pell mell on, regardless of order, and surrounded the castle which contained the prize; but, alas! we are not sure of the bite till it be in our mouths. The approach of the comical and hungry-looking force alarmed the gudewife. She withdrew her cheese, bolted the door, barricaded the window, and patiently waited the onslaught. One hero advanced, put his mouth to the key-

hole of the door, and cried aloud, "Far's the cheese and bannocks?"

"It taks me to support my ain family," answered the prudent wife.

"That's mere sham. Hae ye nae meal?" yelled her interrogator.

"Nane for you, at ony rate," boldly replied the landlady.

"Break up the door!" exclaimed General Gammon.

"My troth, if you do that, sharply retorted the heroine, "I'll cleave some o' ye wi' the poker."

The bravery of the Tothills landlady triumphantly repulsed the allied forces of the Chartist Imperialists, and the generals commanded a retreat. They now pursued their course until about half a mile beyond the half-way house to Forfar, and here they encamped amongst the heather to await the arrival of reinforcements from the capital of the county. Here Mitchell mounted a "feal" dyke and harangued the mob. Their spirits had now begun to flag. When out in the great open country, with lofty mountains surrounding them, and where little could be seen but huge prairies of heather, and forests of young trees, they began to feel their own littleness. Reason, for a time deposed, was struggling to mount its throne, and the ravings of the firebrand failed in reviving the expiring flames of fanaticism; but as a single blast of wind will sometimes blow the embers into a blaze, so a trifling circumstance occurred here which fanned the waning fire of democratic insanity into its original devouring fury. Whilst Mitchell was speaking, a man was seen in the distance mounted on horseback. Some one cried out, "The constables are coming." The generals stood for a moment speechless with alarm. In a few minutes a wag arrived from Dundee and informed them that the

town was in the greatest confusion, that ten thousand *brave* men were coming out to join them, that the Magistrates had sent to Perth for the Scots Greys, who were to be ordered out to give them battle! Here they all started to their feet. General Gammon mounted the top of the "feal" dyke and proposed that Mr John Mitchell be elected "Commander-in-chief of the Chartist forces now assembled on Lorn's Hill!" The proposition was cheered and carried unanimously. Commander Mitchell then divided his army into eleven companies, gave them a secret pass word, and told them to die game. At this moment the man on horseback came galloping up, and a cry was given that the soldiers were coming. To fight or not to fight—that was the question; but one of the generals, thinking discretion the better part of valour, cried aloud, "Fly, men, fly! for if you are taken you will be hanged!" The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he darted into the thickest of the wood, and never stopped until he arrived at Blairgowrie, where he quietly remained until the fiend he had helped to evoke was completely exorcised.

'After the sudden flight of the general, and the termination of the panic produced by the sight of a single horseman, the remaining commanders, in conjunction with their chief, decided on sending an ambassador to Forfar; but the specific mission which his excellency was charged with—who, by the by, was one of the sons of Crispin—I have not been able to fathom. Whether it was to plot with his brother cobblers in getting up a demonstration, or to negotiate with the Magistrates for food to the forces, cannot, perhaps, be now ascertained. At all events, he no sooner made his appearance within the precincts of the town, than he, as well as his suite (a little terrier dog), were quietly lodged in jail, and generously provided with

a hearty supper by the worthy officials of Forfar. After the despatch of this business, the commander-in-chief ordered the army to continue its march to the north, as the promised reinforcement had not appeared.

‘On their arrival at Tarbrax, they were joined by the provision party under the command of the “little corporal,” who had gone in advance to levy a food-tax on the rustics. They here bivouacked a few minutes on the turnpike road, each company by itself, whilst the generals announced to them that in every house in the neighbourhood a potful of excellent potatoes was preparing for their use. This joyful intelligence was scarcely communicated, when there might have been seen, issuing from every cottar’s door, its kind-hearted female occupant, carrying a huge pot brimful of smoking potatoes, which they quietly deposited on the centre of the road. A strong guard, armed with rungs cut from the woods of Tealing, encircled every pot, as their superiors wisely concluded that nothing but the awe of physical force would effectually constrain the army, under such circumstances, to pay anything like respect to their darling doctrines—Equality and Fraternity. During the potato feast, the generals, as if to mock the dogma of which they had constituted themselves the heroes, quietly slipped out of their ranks, entered the toll, and perished the farmer of Powrie’s 3s. 6d., by purchasing bread and porter, and banqueting thereon—a treat more in harmony, they conceived, with their exalted rank than potatoes and salt. By the time the order was again given to advance, darkness covered the face of the country, and occasional gleams of lightning glanced across the sky. Few knew anything of the route they were traversing, and they wandered on, huddled together like a flock of sheep, trembling at some impending danger, while the lurid

glare of the elemental fire filled their minds with slavish fear, and looked as if nature itself felt angry and sorry at their folly.

‘On arriving at the little river that runs along the luxuriant vale which stretches from the Sidlaws to the vicinity of Forfar, they halted, and some awe-struck hero cried aloud, “Men, our heads are turned; this water is running to the left hand, whereas it should run to the right!” Here was a dilemma. What was to be done? The water phenomenon was examined by the united wisdom of the army, and one general satisfactorily solved the problem by sagely averring that “the world’s turned up-side-down at nicht, an’ water that rins east through the day rins wast through the nicht!” Whether the general’s scientific elucidation of the course of Kerbit Water satisfied the army I have no means of knowing; one thing I do know—that I have correctly represented his wonderful philosophy.

‘On their arrival at a small wood within two miles of Forfar, they encamped for the night. Their numbers by this time were considerably diminished. The desertion of one of the generals on Lorn’s Hill had damped their patriotic spirits, and their ranks, if a hackneyed phrase may be used, were turning “small by degrees and beautifully less.” On Lorn’s Hill they numbered 330 males and 12 females; and on reaching the wood, where they rested, they only boasted of 200 rank and file, including 10 democratic heroines, whose names are unfortunately lost to history. Here they stretched themselves amongst the heather, resigned their wearied bodies to the care of Morpheus, and vowed that on the following day they would march on Forfar, and then!—and then!—the chosen band, who had “heard of battles, and longed to follow to the field their warlike lords.” would storm the

town, depose all antiquated authority, and proclaim old Scotland "the land of the brave and the free." A few of the army who could not reconcile their minds to a heather bed, and who felt more anxious for a hearty supper, proceeded to a farm in the vicinity to try their fortune. One of them, in detailing his adventures to the writer, remarked: "When we knocked at the farmer's window, a soft sweet voice cried, 'Who's there?' I answered, 'O, we are the Chartists from Dundee; can you give us anything to eat?' 'Oh, dinna set fire to the toon, than,' answered the female, as I think she was; 'come roond to the back door, an' I'll hand you oot some bannocks an' a plate o' milk.' We went round; the bannocks were handed to me; and another fellow, who had a terrific pair of black whiskers, took the huge plate of milk, which was covered with a thick cream. In great haste to drink of the nutritious beverage, he put the plate to his head, a sudden jerk sent his hairy face nearly two inches deep in the milk, and the cream stuck to his dial plate like a plaster. It was a funny sight. He looked as if he was stuccoed for a phrenological cast of his cranium."

"On the following morning, the generals arranged their men into one compact column of four men deep, and ordered them to advance on Forfar. On their arriving at the suburbs of the town they met no soldiers or specials to oppose them. The only being they saw astir was a solitary weaver with a box of bobbins, who appeared alarmed at such an influx of strangers. For a few moments he gazed at them in amazement; and on learning their mission, he cried out, "Mind your eyes now, lads, for ye'll get hot wark o'd some o' ye yet!" A prophetic hint that was fully realised. On reaching the centre of the town they found a strong body of specials

drawn up, and prepared to defend the passage to the Spout. The constables, on getting a full view of the exhausted and miserable-looking band, dropped their batons by their sides, shook their heads, and retired to collect a subscription to provide them with food. When the authorities discovered the true character of their invaders, their fears turned into pity, and they at once released their ambassador and his four-footed friend, and set about conquering the whole with bannocks and small beer. The dispirited army had now almost finished its campaign; but prior to its dissolution, a flourish of trumpets on a small scale was agreed to. They proceeded to the Market Muir, constituted a public meeting, called on the men of Forfar to join them, and appointed a deputation to fire the patriotism of the good folks of Kirriemuir. By the influence of Mr Proctor, the working men of Forfar were dissuaded from having anything to do with the lunatic scheme; and the deputation who went to Kirriemuir met with poor encouragement, if we may judge by the speech of its organ, who, on returning, gave the following report, which I give to the reader *verbatim et literatim* :—

“Mr Chairman, we went to Kirriemuir, but couldna get a meetin’. The fowk were a’ at the shearin’; but we got a guid feed o’ porridge an’ milk, an’ a’e auld wife gae us a sheed o’ laif bread spread wi’ treacle; but we wes telt that there wes plenty airms i’ the toon, an’ I am share the Kirriemarians wad fecht, an’ no mistake.”

‘Here the orator suddenly stopped, and the crowd gave a faint huzza of approval; while the specials, now fully convinced there was no danger, returned to their various daily pursuits. The Dundee heroes then gathered round their flag, and, like a certain French king, “marched back again,” amidst the jeers and laughter of the inhabitants.

Their orators and generals had now a complete view of the whole rationale of their campaign, and they began to see the full force of their folly; and ashamed at their conduct, or alarmed at the vengeance of the law which they had despised, they were scarcely beyond the precincts of Forfar when they thought of nothing but escape from the scene of their ludicrous exhibition. Mitchell—who had been, in a momentary frenzy of enthusiasm, invested with the distinction of commander-in-chief—changed his name to David Smith, remained for a few days in some obscure place in the country, visited Dundee privately; ultimately, when the chase was becoming too hot, he crossed the Tay at Errol, wandered through Fife to Edinburgh, from thence to Hull, afterwards to Liverpool, where he sailed to America. . . . The remainder of the forces were conducted to Dundee, where they landed under cover of night, by Generals Fudge and Gammon; and when they arrived at Stobsmuir only two dozen could be mustered of the terrible army. After the scene on Lorn's Hill, it gradually melted away, until few remained excepting the two generals and their chosen staff. Such is a truthful history of the beginning and end of what may be aptly called the pilgrimage of folly.

‘Now, seriously, such a narrative is replete with instruction, and brimful of lessons to the people. One of the generals who brought them back to Dundee fled to Glasgow, and ultimately died in misery; the other proceeded to Liverpool, and has led a wandering, irregular life ever since. A few other minor actors were tried in Edinburgh, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment; and John Duncan, the most straightforward and honest of the batch, under the constant terror of the law, sunk into a hopeless state of insanity, and ended his days in a lunatic asylum.’

The *Dundee Herald*—a newspaper which, as already stated, was started as the organ of Chartist principles, and which published its first number on the Friday after these exciting occurrences—gave some particulars as to the manner in which the Forfar people were affected by them, and of the proceedings of the mob in that town, which were placed in as favourable a light as possible. From its report we quote the following:—

‘Since Thursday last, this town has been in a state of considerable anxiety concerning the proceedings in Manchester and the other disturbed districts in England, together with those in the West of Scotland. Throughout the day, groups of people were seen standing in every street and corner of the town, and each night the Masons’ Hall was crowded to suffocation, to hear the daily newspapers read, which was done by an individual elevated upon a table. So deep was the anxiety of the workmen to ascertain the result, that even on Sabbath they assembled on the Market stance, where the news of the day were read aloud, after which a gentleman from Dundee came forward and addressed the people assembled. He stated that he had come to the town for his health, and not as a deputy, and embraced the present opportunity of informing them, that the workmen of Dundee, to the amount of 12,000, had agreed to resolutions almost unanimously to strike work on Monday, and not to resume it till they received the wages of 1839. The gentleman then, in a short and pithy address, impressed on those around him the necessity of the people of Forfar adopting the same course.

‘Accordingly, on Monday morning, as early as seven o’clock, a band of music commenced to parade the streets, in order to assemble the inhabitants. At eight o’clock, a great concourse of the workmen were to be seen on the

Market stance. John Millar was called to the chair. He briefly warned the people to be quiet and orderly, as resolutions were to be proposed for their adoption which demanded their most serious consideration. Then Robert Proctor, after making a few concise introductory remarks, proposed the following resolution :—

“Resolved, that this meeting, having heard that the inhabitants of Dundee are to hold a public meeting this morning, 22d instant, in order to take into consideration the necessity of making a general strike in order to stop the productive powers of industry, until they receive political justice, and the People’s Charter be made the law of this country, do resolve—that we, the inhabitants of Forfar and the surrounding district, shall, in the event of the inhabitants of Dundee commencing to act upon the principles of ceasing to labour, and that life and property shall be protected, only extending themselves over the country making a peaceable appeal to the land-holders for support during the strike,—we, the inhabitants of this town, do agree to act in union with Dundee, in order to carry out the great principles of British liberty ;”

‘Which motion, being seconded by James Milne, was carried unanimously.

‘On Tuesday evening, the inhabitants were called together by the arrival of a person from Dundee, who stated that the inhabitants of Dundee had commenced the strike, by making a procession in order to stop the public works, and that they had been stopped by a powerful constabulary and police force, and in a large body had left the town, and were on the road to Forfar to make an endeavour to swell their forces. He met with such a flattering reception, that numbers went with him to meet the body ; which created great alarm to our leading manufacturers—so great, that some of the middle class

men, in their zeal to show their loyalty to the laws which afford them ease and a good dinner, made such a noise in arousing individuals to appear as constables in the dead of the night, as started numbers of the peaceful lieges from their slumbers, under the apprehension that the town was besieged. About three o'clock in the morning, a crowd, to the number of above 400, entered the town, marching in regular order, bearing a white banner, all armed with sticks. On their arrival near the Town House, they were stopped by a powerful body of constables, with the Sheriff and Magistrates at their head. Some altercation took place as to their intention, when they stated that they wished to commit no riot, but to go to the Market stance, and there to remain quiet until they saw the result of a meeting which was to take place, and they then would leave the town in peace. They were allowed to pass. They accordingly went to the Market stance, and planted their standard; and from day-break to the hour of meeting, they were visited by large numbers of the inhabitants, by whom they were kindly treated. They took them to their houses and gave them meat; collections of money were made, and bread and beer purchased, which was served to them on the ground. One brewer—Mr James Keay—gave them 9s. worth of beer himself—an action which reflects credit upon that gentleman. The hour of meeting (ten o'clock) arrived, when a large number of people had assembled. William Stirling, blacksmith, was called to the chair. Mr Mitchell then addressed the meeting in a long speech, upon the necessity of some bold and decisive step being adopted to better the condition of the working classes. He was followed by Mr Clark, who made an able speech upon the same subject. Robert Proctor then made a few remarks, which concluded the meeting. The whole meeting then

arranged themselves in regular order, the natives of Dundee in front, and marched along the principal streets. The Forfarians accompanied them along the road which leads to Dundee for about a mile, and then parted, by giving three hearty cheers for the cause of the people. Everything is now quiet, and the people have returned to their work.'

This account, as was to be expected, is materially different from that given by the *Warder*, and also from that of the *Courier*, whose report closed as follows:—

'The body, after committing slight depredations among the turnip fields by the road, and obtaining food at several houses, reached Forfar about four o'clock next morning, their numbers having dwindled down to from 200 to 300. The alarm occasioned in Forfar by the rumoured advance of a large body of rioters from Dundee was great; but when the jaded, worn-out Chartists arrived, that feeling was turned into pity. Their brother Chartists refused to turn out in any numbers to their assistance, and their hopes were thus disappointed. The Magistrates, however, with a judgment which we are at a loss whether to censure or extol, provided a slight repast for the hungry Chartists; and, after various attempts to make a demonstration with their brethren in the county town, they were fain to wend their way in groups of five or six backwards to Dundee, fearful of any attack on the road.

'They arrived here on Wednesday evening, better men than they set out, evidently thoroughly convinced of the folly of their futile attempt at agitation. It was generally observed on Thursday, that the streets had not been quieter for months previously—scarcely a single Chartist venturing to show himself on the street throughout the

day. Since then, not the slightest symptom of disturbance has prevailed, and we have no apprehension of a similar attempt being made for a long time to come. It is a fact, that, the jailor of Forfar—a stout, determined man—remarked that, with six other determined men to assist him, he could have given the entire mob from Dundee a hearty whipping, and sent them home; and we as heartily believe he could.

‘Immediately after the riots were suppressed, several of the leaders in the agitation were arrested. John Duncan, the Chartist preacher, was arrested in his own house early on Wednesday morning, when preparing to leave for Forfar to aid the rebellious proceedings in that place. John Penny—son of the late John Penny, of the defunct Political Union—was apprehended on the High Street at half-past six on Tuesday evening. Alexander Stewart, one of the ‘Democratic Council,’ and Hugh Ross, the chairman of the Magdalen Yard meetings, were apprehended on Thursday last.’

The *Herald*, writing in the interest of the Chartists, thus commented upon the proceedings, and the course pursued by the local Magistracy:—

‘It is not possible to look over the proceedings which have taken place in Dundee during the last eight days, without having raised in our minds the question, “Have the wisest measures been adopted to meet the difficulties?” It appears to us, that never at any time did the movements of the people betoken such disaster to the lives and properties of the lieges as warranted the authorities in adopting the strong measures they did. The objects of the people we stop not here to notice. They may have been ill-advised, ill-timed; but there was a display of physical force on the part of those in power,

in our opinion, rather calculated to awaken hostility to "the powers that be" than to allay it. The people did no violence (let this be remembered), placards, announcing that the Act had been read, were exhibited, showed that the whole machinery had been prepared.—It is even said that some of the bills were posted an hour before the Riot Act was read! A question is asked by many, "What were John Duncan, John Penny, and the others apprehended for?" No one appears able to answer it. We refrain at present from saying anything upon the subject, as the charges have not yet been made out against them. When these are made known, we shall have something to deal with; at present, it is mere rumour. Some are laying great blame on the Chartist, as having been connected with the movement here. They should remember that, in different parts of the country, it has assumed different aspects; and if in Dundee more of the Chartist leaders have become mixed up with it than in many other places, it may have been more from the nature of the circumstances than anything else.'

CHAPTER VII.

Revival of Trade; the Election of Police Commissioners; Visit of Mr Crawford and Mr Henry Vincent; the Municipal Election; Requisition to the Provost; Conference in Birmingham; Election of Delegates; Trial of Rioters; Quiet Restored; Visit from Messrs Dunscombe and F. O'Connor.

Immediately following upon the laughable 'March to Forfar,' the manufacturing districts, which had been in so disturbed a state, began to settle down into their wonted tranquillity, and trade showed cheering signs of reviving all over the country. Dundee shared in the general return of prosperity, and the agitation for the Charter again declined.

At the election of Police Commissioners, in October 1842, the Chartists again exerted themselves to return men after their own heart as members: and in this they were so successful that, according to the *Herald*, 16 out of the 22 elected were prepared to vote for the whole points of the Charter. At the election in 1841, only seven Commissioners supported exclusively by the Chartist party were returned; three returned were supported by both parties; and the remaining 12 owed their election to the exclusive support of the opponents of Chartist ascendancy. The result was hailed with great satisfaction by the Chartists, and caused the *Courier* to comment regretfully on the 'great blunder' which had been committed in 'permitting persons who pay only an annual rent of 40s. to have a vote in electing Commissioners equal to a person who pays 50 times the amount,' and the 'mischievous consequences' which had resulted from allowing 'persons inhabiting premises renting £10 a year to be qualified to act as Commissioners of Police.' It remarked:

'It was a great blunder, of which many who advocated the change are now sensible. We are not aware that any town of the same extent in the empire has so low a qualification for electors and Commissioners of Police. It may operate as a lesson against the views entertained by those who advocate Universal Suffrage and the Charter. What would be the consequence were the franchise equally low in voting for members of the House of Commons, and men in the lower ranks of life sent as hired servants to that assembly? Would our liberties and property be long secure under such a system?'

On Friday, October 7, 1842, Mr Sharman Crawford M.P., and Mr Henry Vincent addressed a public meeting

in the Thistle Hall, in advocacy of the six points of the Charter; and on the following Friday evening Mr Vincent again addressed the Chartists in Bell Street Secession Chapel. Councillor Easson was chairman at both of these meetings.

At the Municipal elections in November of the same year there was a very exciting contest, chiefly among the Chartists, Sturgites, and Non-intrusionists; and the *Warder* and the *Herald*, the organs of the two respective parties, entered very warmly into the contest. Probably at no former burgh election did so much vulgar scurrility and personal abuse of individuals make its appearance through the local press—a condescension at which the *Courier* affected to be quite shocked. For days together the walls of the town were covered with bills, chiefly put forth by the Chartists and Complete Suffragists, in which the most unqualified and unscrupulous charges were brought forward against the candidates who were opposed to their views. In some cases, according to the Conservative organ, the inuendoes perpetrated were ‘of such a nature as would render the parties unfit for being members of civilised society, instead of being elected into public offices by their fellow citizens.’ The state of matters was such, that the Conservatives took little part in the contest, and the tug of war was mainly between the Voluntary, Chartist, and Non-Intrusion parties. The result was not so satisfactory to the Chartists as they desired.

A requisition was, in December 1842, presented to Provost Lawson, signed by 120 ‘electors and burgesses,’ requesting him to call a public meeting for the purpose of ‘appointing delegates to attend the Conference to be held in Birmingham on the 27th December next, to

prepare a Bill to be submitted to Parliament containing the principles of a full, fair, and free representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament.' The Provost, however, declined to comply with this requisition, and a meeting for the purpose was in consequence called by the authority of the Complete Suffrage Association, and was held on the evening of December 9—Mr Alexander Easson in the chair. We take the following from the *Courier's* report of the meeting:—

‘Mr Easson then introduced Dominie Clyde, who gave a long harangue about the extension of the suffrage, and what he termed class legislation, which was received with hisses and cheers. Mr Clyde concluded with a motion for the election of a Welshman of the name of O. J. Rowland as a fit representative for the district at the Birmingham Conference, which motion was seconded by Mr Durham, stationer, who concurred with all that the dominie had expressed.—Mr A. Sime, flax-dresser, and late Chartist preacher, came forward and made a lengthy speech upon union betwixt the middle and working classes, and the qualities their representative ought to possess. He concluded with moving that Isaac Peterkin, ljun., should be elected, as he was well qualified for the office. This motion was seconded by a Mr Anderson.

‘After some consultation among the parties on the platform, the Chairman announced that any individual had a right to propose any person he might think fit for a representative at the Conference; when some person in the back end of the hall proposed Peterkin's mover (Syme), which was seconded; but he would not consent to stand.—Adams, the late Chartist chairman, then rose and proposed the election of William Davidson (who presided at the meetings of the Chartists during the late riots), which was seconded by a boy about 14 years of

age, a member of what is termed the Youths' Democratic Association. He made some sharp observations against Peterkin, whom he termed a traitor to the working classes. This led to considerable uproar, to the evident mortification of the Chairman and those around him. After quietness had in some degree been restored, Mr Easson intimated that any person might put questions to the candidates. An individual at the side of the rostrum then asked Peterkin what were his views regarding free trade. Peterkin rose and craved indulgence to reply to the remarks made against him by the youth, which did not appear satisfactory, from the manner in which they were received. As for free trade, he considered it a humbug without the franchise; and he would sooner live on husks than agitate for it without the suffrage. Several individuals then addressed the meeting, some for Peterkin, and others for Davidson, amidst much uproar and confusion.

'After order had in some degree been restored, the Welshman gave a short exposition of his principles, intimating that he was going to represent the "workies" as well as the middle class, and that he was ready to answer any question they might put; when up started Dominie Hunter, and asked if he would support the six points of the Charter, which Rowland answered in the affirmative. The vote was then taken, when he was unanimously elected. On a second representative being proposed, one-third appeared for Peterkin and two-thirds for Davidson, who declared he would vote for the Charter, and nothing but the Charter. The tug of war now came as to how the expenses of their mission were to be paid. The Welshman stated that he would pay his own expenses; but it was intimated that it would be necessary to raise ten pounds for Davidson, as he might be absent

for six days. A committee was appointed to raise the needful; and as we retired, we observed twopence-half-penny in the plate as a contribution towards his mission. The Sturgites appeared to be somewhat chopfallen by the rejection of Peterkin, their nominee; and altogether the meeting was a complete failure, there not being any more present than those who had signed the requisition.'

On Monday, January 16, 1843, John Duncan, preacher; John Penney, mechanic; Hugh Ross, tailor; James Graham, weaver; John Scott and Peter Bennet, flax dressers, were tried before the High Court of Justiciary, for their participation in the disturbances during the month of August preceding. With the exception of John Duncan, all the prisoners pleaded guilty to the charges as libelled, and as the Crown did not wish to press the charges severely against them, they were sentenced to four months' imprisonment each in Dundee Jail. The diet against John Duncan was deserted, and a new warrant issued for his detention; but he was liberated on bail. William Clark, John Mitchell, Thomas Anderson, and James Pryde, who had been included in the same indictment, were outlawed for non-appearance.

From this period until the month of October, the Chartists were comparatively quiet. On the evening of Tuesday, October 24, 1843, however, a soiree was held in their church, in Lindsay Street, in honour of a visit from Messrs Duncombe and Feargus O'Connor. From a report of the proceedings furnished by a correspondent of the *Advertiser*, we quote the following:—

'Although many went solely to see Mr Duncombe, the attendance was extremely limited; and, when contrasted with the number who assembled to meet O'Connor when

he was last here, this would seem to prove that Chartism is nearly extinct in Dundee. Mr Robert Kidd occupied the chair. Letters were read from George Duncan, Esq., M.P., and Mr Kinloch, in reply to invitations sent them to be present, stating their inability to attend; and a communication from Mr William Christie, in which he stated that he would not attend, as Mr O'Connor opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws, and did all he could to divide the upper and working classes. Messrs William Davidson, William Low, and Thomas Anderson, responded in lengthy harangues to the sentiments—"The People the Source of all Power," "The Speedy Restoration of Frost, Williams, Jones, and Ellis," and "Success to the *Morning Star*." A congratulatory address was read and presented to Messrs Duncombe and O'Connor by the Secretary. Mr John Hunter recited a piece of rhyme he had composed in praise of Messrs Duncombe and O'Connor, for the services they had rendered to the cause of Chartism. The speech of Mr Duncombe was short, as he laboured under indisposition. It was calm, conciliatory, and dignified. Mr O'Connor spoke long, and with more than his wonted energy. As usual, it was full of egotism, and gross abuse of all who dare to dispute his nostrums. He denounced the League and the middle classes, and thought the best name the Complete Suffragists deserved was "Complete Humbugs." He concluded by urging the Chartists to rally round Mr Duncombe as their great leader in the House of Commons, and round himself as their great leader without the House.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Quietness of the Chartists; Failure of the Potato Crop; Climax of the Agitation; the Gathering in London; Local Meetings; the National Guard; End of the Movement; Unsuccessful Attempt to Revive it; Conclusion.

Comparatively little was heard of the Chartists and their movements for a year or two after these events. The year 1846 inaugurated a period of great distress throughout the country, and especially in Ireland, in consequence of the disease which had appeared among the potatoes. All through the year 1847 very little was done locally by the Chartists, although a soiree, held by them in the end of October, showed that the party were still in existence.

The year 1848 was most memorable in the history of Europe. Nearly every throne on the Continent was shaken to its base; and although the British crown remained firm on the head of Queen Victoria, amidst the falling of crowns in the conflict between the ruling powers and the peoples, yet the state of this country was such as to excite considerable alarm. A stagnation of trade through the greater part of 1847, and the panic which followed the bursting of the great railway bubbles, had excited discontent in the minds of the people of England; and the events on the Continent roused them to action. The flight of Louis Philippe, followed by the proclamation of a republic in France, Rome, Berlin, and Vienna, in the hands of the people, and every German and Italian kingdom or duchy obtaining new constitutions, naturally led the people of Great Britain, who had no voice in the Government of the country, but had to fight its battles, share in its burdens, and suffer most from mismanagement, to demand that they should be enfranchised.

The excitement of the time of the Reform Bill came back, the famous Chartist Convention was held, another national petition prepared, and carried up to the House of Commons by a procession from Kennington Common. The Government had previously forbidden, on the authority of an old statute, open air meetings; and the great gathering on Kennington Common was especially prohibited. Mr Bright asked in 'his place in the House,' if the prohibition which the Government had issued referred to the procession or the meeting, and Sir George Grey replied that both would be illegal, as the circumstances were calculated to excite alarm in the minds of her Majesty's subjects. Sir George Grey and the Duke of Wellington took measures to prevent the gathering and guard against any possible results from it. Thousands of special constables were sworn in (including Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor of the French), 'troops were brought to London by night, and secreted along the route of the intended procession; cannon were planted on the bridge and on river steamers; the Bank and other public buildings were fortified as for a siege or storm, and all to overcome a few thousand miserable-looking men, who were allowed to assemble on Kennington Common, and were then informed through their leader, Mr Feargus O'Connor, of the preparations made to resist their march upon Westminster.' The meeting took place on the 10th of April, but a few days before that a Bill was introduced into Parliament, and hurriedly passed, to amend the law on treason and sedition. It repealed previous Acts, wherein death was the penalty for the slightest treasonable deed; and excluded death penalty for all treasonable acts except those which compassed or designed the death or imprisonment of the sovereign, substituting for the offence of sedition that of high treason, and for the punishment of death

that of transportation for life, or at the discretion of the judge any term not less than seven years. The Alien Act was also renewed, with additional clauses arming Government with summary power to expel foreign refugees. The Kennington Common gathering passed off in comparative quietness, but collisions frequently took place between the Chartists and the police in June, and many persons were convicted of seditious speaking and treasonable conspiracy. In Ireland matters were still worse; but they ultimately ended with a slight outbreak at Ballingarry, and the transportation of several individuals.

Locally a number of meetings were held about this time, but none of them were of much importance. On the evening of Monday, March 5, 1848, a meeting was held in the Thistle Hall, one penny being charged for admission, ostensibly to approve of the conduct of the Government in not interfering during the late revolution in France, but in reality to advocate the People's Charter. After a number of addresses had been delivered, resolutions pledging the meeting to unremitting exertions on behalf of universal suffrage and the other provisions of the Charter were passed unanimously.

On the evening of Tuesday, April 11, a meeting was held in Bell Street Hall for the purpose of electing a delegate to attend the Chartist Convention to be held in London. Mr James Graham was appointed.

On the evening of Tuesday, April 11, a meeting was held to celebrate the fraternisation of the Repealers and the Chartists of Dundee.

At a meeting on Thursday, April 20, Mr M·Rae was elected the new delegate to the permanent Convention, in place of Mr Graham.

At the meeting on Monday, May 1, a memorial to her

Majesty, praying her to dismiss her present ministers, and to choose advisers who would make the Charter a Cabinet question, was agreed to.

On the evening of Tuesday, May 16th, 1848, a public meeting was held in Bell Street Hall 'for the purpose of forming a National Guard for the protection of life and property from domestic anarchy and foreign invasion.' The proposal, which formed part of the Chartist agitation, was supported by a speech of a very belligerent character by an old soldier, named Donald Mackay, from Edinburgh, and warmly approved of by the meeting. The necessity for the formation of such a guard was strongly urged by the old soldier, and the question of ways and means was very easily disposed of thus, according to the *Northern Warder*:—

'After expatiating on the merits of the pike, and reading 'The Song of the Pike,' he declared with an oath that he would rather die on the field of battle than see his fellow men die of hunger. It was absolutely necessary, he said, to overturn the Government, or in a short time they would all be starved—(loud applause). Moral force was all humbug—(Hear, hear). Was Sir William Wallace a moral force man?—(cheers and laughter). There would be no difficulty in getting a sufficient supply of arms. As soon as 200 or 300 names had been enrolled, the general officer could order the necessary supply of arms in the name of the National Guard of Scotland. The Birmingham manufacturers, who are speculative men, would immediately obey the order, and give six months' credit. Should they happen, in the course of that six months, to capsize the present Government at the point of the bayonet and pike, the next Government would be a republican one, and the Birmingham merchants would never say a

word about paying for the arms—(cheers)—they would be too happy to think that they had furnished the arms that had formed a glorious republic where once the present despotic Government had reigned—(applause).’

Before separating, a brigadier-general and secretary of the Dundee military division were appointed. The *Warder* of June 19th thus ridiculed the movement:—

‘Can anything be more likely to cast discredit on measures of Reform than to hear the two or three hundred extremely ignorant politicians who meet weekly in Bell Street Hall talking in the name of the whole population? Do they forget the tailors of Tooley Street, who signed *per pro* the people of England? But the comedy does not end here. It is not enough for a dozen men who derive all their political information from some third-rate London newspaper, to take possession of a platform and harangue their enlightened auditory on the rights of labour, the tyranny of Government, and the virtues of a fraudulent Land Scheme. They must fall upon other expedients to keep up the steam—their powers of speechifying are not inexhaustible—new grievances cannot be continually coined—therefore it occurred to the wisdom of the DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL (!!) to form—we are almost ashamed to write it—a *National Guard!!!* For some days past, handbills calling a public meeting in the usual scene of display, and for the purpose of denouncing the Government prosecutions, have been posted up in different parts of the town. Of course, there is the usual genteel appendage—“A penny at the door to defray expenses.” We do not now ask what relationship exists between the penny and the frequency of the meetings, or how far the net profits of the performances encourage their repetition and cheer the hearts of the play-actors. The discerning public know well enough how to appreciate

these things; but what will they say to the concluding line of the placard—"By Order of the National Guard?"

'Ye citizens of Dundee, who believe yourselves almost unprotected from the vengeance of external or internal enemies, for your peace of mind we announce the consoling fact, that a few scores of physical force Chartist have magnanimously formed a battalion to protect you. We have heard of poachers becoming gamekeepers, and inveterate smugglers entering the royal service as excisemen; but such conversions are all out-Heroded by Fussellites and blustering pikemen becoming guards to this powerful nation. We leave our readers to imagine what a delightful state of things it would be were these loyal gentlemen installed as preservers of the public tranquillity. Few as are our present policemen, they are surely somewhat preferable to the talking gentry of Bell Street Hall.

'It really makes us laugh violently to think of a town of 70,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom are industrious and contented, requiring a National Guard, formed by those whom nineteen-twentieths of the people have ever regarded as disturbers of the peace and enemies of civil order.

'As well might Sancho Panza imagine himself a lordly knight errant, as the Chartist demagogue assume the appellation of a guard. Guards indeed! What was the object of their Monday's meeting? To assert the majesty of the law? No, verily; it was to sympathise with a set of incendiaries, for whom, in our opinion, Botany Bay is far too good; to punish whom, in a short and summary manner, the vast majority of our fellow-countrymen would put forth their utmost endeavour. If Robespierre and Danton were friends to liberty, if pikes and ignorance should rule mankind, if John Mitchell is a statesman, not a convict, and Louis Blanc the Chatham of his time, then

may Chartist gatherings be looked on as beneficial, and runaway weavers be enrolled as a National Guard.'

The movement to establish a National Guard in Dundee perished still born. Two more meetings in furtherance of the Charter were held during the year. On Monday, June 12, 1848, a procession and open air demonstration took place on the Magdalen Yard Green, for the purpose of giving a contradiction to the statement that had recently been made by Lord John Russell in Parliament to the effect that the middle and working classes of Great Britain were unfavourable to an extension of the franchise. Resolutions to this effect were passed by the meeting. On the evening of Tuesday, October 24, Mr Feargus O'Connor delivered an address in Bell Street Hall in advocacy of the People's Charter and the land scheme with which he was connected.

From this period the proceedings of the Chartists were unimportant, and the agitation throughout the country came to an end.

An unsuccessful attempt was made locally to revive the agitation in 1850. A meeting was held in Bell Street Hall on the evening of Monday, Sept. 30, to hear an address from Mr Ernest Jones, which was called in the following extraordinary terms:—

'Tyrants, tremble! A public meeting will be held on Monday evening . . . when Ernest Jones, Esq., barrister-at-law, will address the meeting. This noble politician, who has drunk deep of the cup of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, is about to honour Scotland with a visit, when he will thunder his inimitable eloquence in defence of oppressed Fatherland. Neither prison bars nor tyrants'

sneers will quench the burning flame which has been kindled in his breast by the doings of a perfidious middle class and a rapacious, blood-sucking aristocracy. Men of Dundee, rally for Liberty!—the passion of the generous mind. Although its statue is not yet cast, the metal is melting. Prepare yourselves for the hour, for it shall soon be ready. Testify your devotion by your presence in Bell Street Hall on Monday night. Doors open. . . Admission twopence.'

After a lengthy address by Mr Jones, in which he urged his audience, as they valued the attainment of their rights and desired to see the People's Charter become the law of the land, to enlist themselves in the ranks of the Democratic Association, the following resolution was adopted by the meeting :—

'Resolved, that all men are brethren ; that an injustice inflicted on one is a crime against all ; that the atrocious cruelties perpetrated in Italy and Hungary by Marshall Haynau, constitute him the open enemy of the human race. We therefore express our unqualified approbation of the reception given him by the brave men and women of Bankside, and hope that a similar chastisement will be awarded to all who trample upon the sacred rights of humanity.'

Since this period, the Chartist agitation has been a thing of the past. At the time it was in progress, the Chartists no doubt believed they were being ground to death by a bloated aristocracy and a brutal middle class ; the aristocracy and the middle class as sincerely believed that the Chartists were wanton rebels, fire-raisers, and cut-throats. It was in that sense a war of classes, and each judged the other as enemies do. Passions cooled, and better times came. By means of constitutional agi-

tation, the country has now adopted all the really important points of the Charter. We have virtually manhood suffrage; we have vote by ballot; we have abolished property qualification for members of Parliament; and the late Redistribution measure went a great way towards establishing equal electoral districts. The great majority of the men who took part in the Chartist agitation have now passed away, while the few that remain are as the gleanings of the grapes when the vintage is done. The present generation are comparatively ignorant of the events of the Chartist agitation, and the foregoing memoranda may therefore be interesting, as showing the fierce battle which was fought locally on behalf of the rights of man.





